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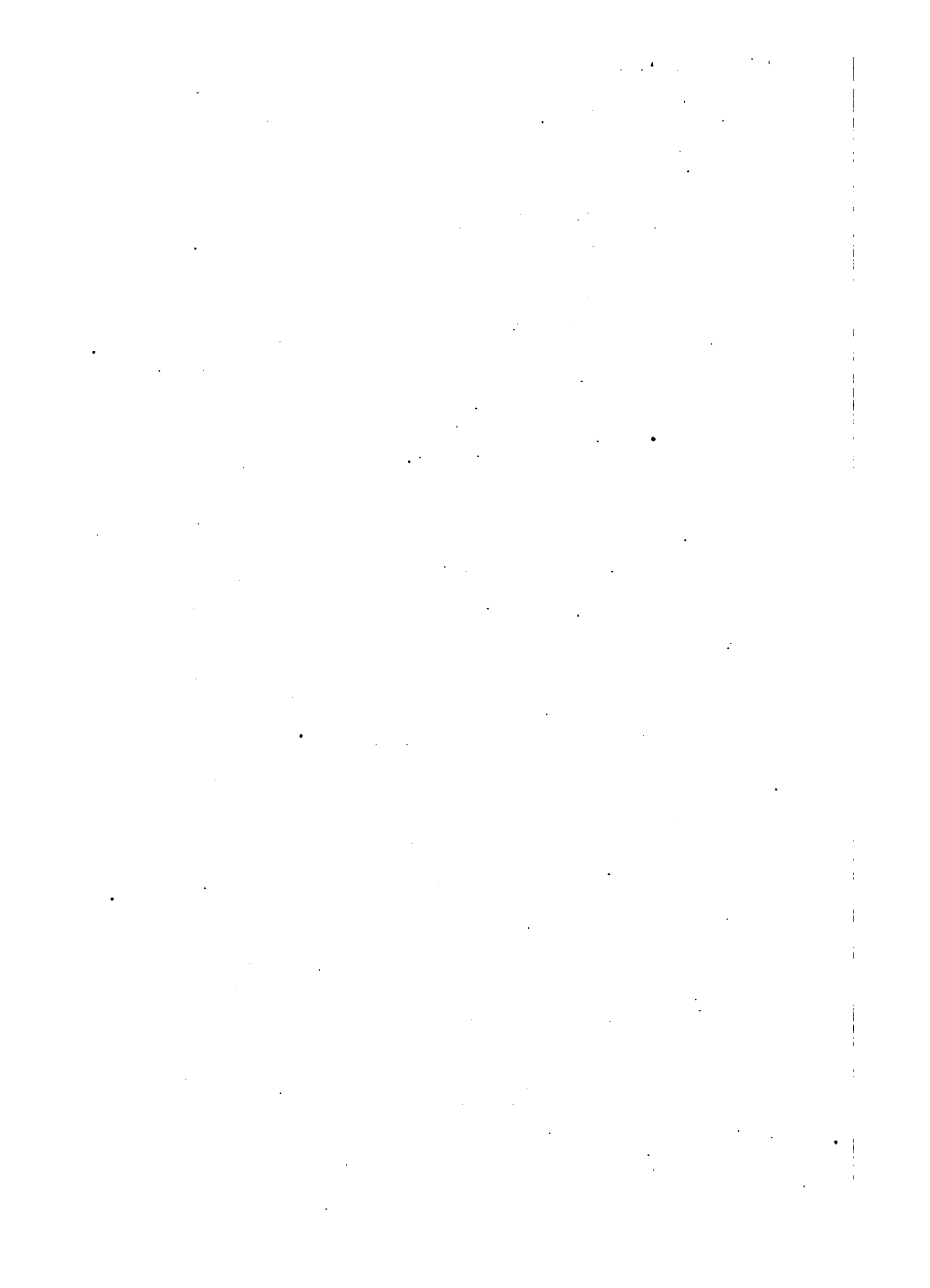












Silvan King  
from her grateful  
friend  
The Author

A Book of Lyrics

*Per angustas ad augusta*





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# AUTUMN SWALLOWS

*A BOOK OF LYRICS*

BY

ELLICE HOPKINS

London

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1883

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## CONTENTS.

|                                         | PAGE |
|-----------------------------------------|------|
| LIFE IN DEATH . . . . .                 | I    |
| THE GOLDEN LADDER . . . . .             | 5    |
| THE MOONLIGHT PATH . . . . .            | 9    |
| THE EAGLE . . . . .                     | 13   |
| A PORTRAIT . . . . .                    | 17   |
| BORMUS . . . . .                        | 23   |
| THE SONG . . . . .                      | 28   |
| THE SEA-KING . . . . .                  | 31   |
| TWO VOICES . . . . .                    | 36   |
| A WAVE . . . . .                        | 40   |
| LEAVES . . . . .                        | 43   |
| THE NIGHT AFTER DEATH . . . . .         | 48   |
| THE CONTRAST . . . . .                  | 51   |
| DRIFT-WOOD . . . . .                    | 54   |
| VALE ! VALE ! . . . . .                 | 57   |
| LOVE AND SLEEP AND DEATH . . . . .      | 59   |
| ON A WHITE BUTTERFLY . . . . .          | 64   |
| GREEN GRAVES . . . . .                  | 68   |
| THE WORLD OF MIGHT-HAVE-BEENS . . . . . | 71   |

|                                           | PAGE |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| TO THE GOLDEN ALPINE HEARTSEASE . . . . . | 75   |
| THE HIDDEN BOW . . . . .                  | 78   |
| THE SYMPATHY OF NATURE . . . . .          | 81   |
| THE WAYSIDE ANGEL . . . . .               | 85   |
| TO ROBERT HERRICK . . . . .               | 88   |
| A GARDEN OF GIRLS . . . . .               | 91   |
| THE CHILDREN'S BEDTIME . . . . .          | 95   |
| A BACK-STREET CHILD . . . . .             | 99   |
| THE HIDDEN ONES . . . . .                 | 103  |
| τὸ φανερούμενον φῶς . . . . .             | 104  |
| DAISIES . . . . .                         | 106  |
| A FLOOD IN SPRING . . . . .               | 111  |
| ON A DEAD ROBIN IN A CHURCH . . . . .     | 114  |
| IN AMONG THE WHEAT . . . . .              | 118  |
| THE FIELD FLOWER . . . . .                | 121  |
| THE FOLDED LEAF . . . . .                 | 124  |
| THE EARRING . . . . .                     | 126  |
| WEDDED SLEEP . . . . .                    | 127  |
| THE THUNDER SHOWER . . . . .              | 129  |
| ME IN THEE . . . . .                      | 131  |
| THE LOVER'S MAY-DAY SONG . . . . .        | 133  |
| THE MAIDEN'S SONG . . . . .               | 135  |
| 'GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD DAY' . . . . .       | 137  |
| THE BURIED THORN . . . . .                | 139  |
| HÆMONY . . . . .                          | 141  |
| LADY, WHY ART THOU SAD? . . . . .         | 144  |
| 'JE MOURRAI SEUL' . . . . .               | 146  |

# CONTENTS.

vii

|                                                                                 | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| THE TWO WORLDS . . . . .                                                        | 148  |
| COR CORDIUM . . . . .                                                           | 151  |
| THE MYSTERY OF PAIN . . . . .                                                   | 155  |
| A DIRGE . . . . .                                                               | 159  |
| THE SWORD OF GOD . . . . .                                                      | 163  |
| A VISION OF WOMANHOOD . . . . .                                                 | 168  |
| THE WORLD'S OUTCASTS . . . . .                                                  | 171  |
| RUBÁIYÁT . . . . .                                                              | 175  |
| LIFE'S COST . . . . .                                                           | 178  |
| THE SOUL'S MYSTERY . . . . .                                                    | 182  |
| THE REVIVALISTS . . . . .                                                       | 185  |
| LIFE'S ISSUES . . . . .                                                         | 189  |
| FAILURE . . . . .                                                               | 192  |
| ABSOLVO TE . . . . .                                                            | 194  |
| THE SUPREME KISS . . . . .                                                      | 198  |
| IN MY GARDEN . . . . .                                                          | 199  |
| LOVE'S QUESTION AND ANSWER . . . . .                                            | 202  |
| SPRING SADNESS . . . . .                                                        | 205  |
| 'MAN FLEETH AS IT WERE A SHADOW, AND NEVER<br>CONTINUETH IN ONE STAY' . . . . . | 207  |
| EVENING CLOUDS . . . . .                                                        | 210  |
| 'AND THE STAR THEY SAW IN THE EAST WENT BE-<br>FORE THEM' . . . . .             | 211  |

## SONNETS.

|                                           |     |
|-------------------------------------------|-----|
| MEDUSA . . . . .                          | 217 |
| THE INFINITE WITHIN AND WITHOUT . . . . . | 218 |

|                                             | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------------|------|
| THE INVULNERABLE LIFE . . . . .             | 219  |
| ON THE UPPER GLACIER, GRINDELWALD . . . . . | 220  |
| RAILWAY STEAM . . . . .                     | 222  |
| LIBERTY AND NECESSITY . . . . .             | 223  |
| BITTER SPRINGS . . . . .                    | 224  |
| HUMAN SMILES . . . . .                      | 225  |
| ON DISTANT FIRING . . . . .                 | 226  |
| LOVE AND A WAVE . . . . .                   | 227  |
| BOY AND GIRL . . . . .                      | 228  |
| MAN AND MAID . . . . .                      | 229  |
| A PRAYERLESS SABBATH . . . . .              | 230  |
| GNOMIDIA . . . . .                          | 233  |
| THE MIND OF MAN . . . . .                   | 251  |
| THE EARTH-SONG OF LOVE . . . . .            | 255  |
| A THOUGHT FROM THE GERMAN . . . . .         | 261  |
| FROM THE PERSIAN . . . . .                  | 263  |
| MAN'S GRATITUDE . . . . .                   | 265  |
| LOVE . . . . .                              | 267  |
| LOST IN LIFE . . . . .                      | 271  |
| THE WORLD-FORCES . . . . .                  | 276  |
| CONSONANCES . . . . .                       | 278  |
| NOTES . . . . .                             | 283  |

## LIFE IN DEATH.

I HEARD him in the autumn winds,  
I felt him in the cadent star,  
And in the shattered mirror of the wave,  
That still in death a rapture finds,  
I caught his image faint and far;  
And musing in the twilight on the grave,  
I heard his footstep stealing by,  
Where the long churchyard grasses sigh.

But never might I see his face,  
Though everywhere I found Death's hand,  
And his large language all things living spake ;  
And ever heavy with the grace



Of bygone things through all the land  
The song of birds or distant church-bells brake.  
‘I will arise and seek his face,’  
I said, ‘ere wrapped in his embrace.’

‘For Death is king of life,’ I cried,  
‘Beauty is but his pomp and state ;  
His kiss is on the apple’s crimson cheek,  
And with the grape his feet are dyed,  
Treading at noon the purple vat ;  
And flowers, more radiant hued, more quickly seek  
His face, betraying, in disguise  
Their young blooms are but autumn dyes.’

Then I arose ere dawn, and found  
A faded lily. ‘Lo, ’tis He !  
I will surprise him in his golden bed,  
Where, muffled close from light and sound,  
He sleeps the day up.’ Noiselessly  
I drew the faded curtains from his head,  
And, peeping, found, not Death below,  
But fairy life set all arow.

A chrysalis next I chanced upon :  
    'Death in this dusty shroud has dwelt !'  
But stooping saw a wingèd Thing, sun-kist,  
    Crusted with jewels Life had won  
    From Death's dim dust ; and as I knelt,  
Some passion shook the jewels into mist,  
    Some ecstasy of coming flight,  
    And lo, he passed in morning light.

And as I paced, still questioning,  
    Behold, a dead bird at my feet ;  
The faded violets of his filmy eyes,  
    And tender loosened throat, to sing  
    No more to us his nocturns sweet,  
Told me that death at length before me lies.  
    But gazing, quick I turned in fear,  
    Not Death, but teeming Life was there.

Then haply Death keeps house within ?  
    And with the scalpel of keen thought  
I traced the chemic travail of the brain,  
    The throb and pulse of Life's machine,

And mystic force with force still caught  
In the embrace that maketh one of twain ;  
And all the beatings, swift and slow,  
Of Life's vibration to and fro.

And still I found the downward swing,  
Decay, but ere I cried ' Lo, here ! '   
The upward stroke rang out glad life and breath ;  
And still dead winters changed with spring,  
And graves the new birth's cradle were ;  
And still I grasped the flying skirts of Death,  
And still he turned, and, beaming fair,  
The radiant face of Life was there !

## THE GOLDEN LADDER.

WHEN torn with Passion's insecure delights,  
By Love's dear torment, ceaseless changes worn,  
As my swift sphere full twenty days and nights  
Did make ere one slow morn and eve were born ;

I passed within the dim sweet world of flowers,  
Where only harmless lights, not hearts, are broken,  
And weep but the sweet-watered summer showers—  
World of white joys, cool dews, and peace unspoken ;

I started even there among the flowers,  
To find the tokens mute of what I fled,  
Passions, and forces, and resistless powers,  
That have upturn the world, and stirred the dead.

In secret bowers of amethyst and rose,  
Close wrapped in fragrant golden curtains laid,  
Where silver lattices to morn unclosed,  
The fairy lover clasps his flower-maid.

Patient she yields to his caresses' strength,  
And in her simple bosom 'neath fair skies  
Love's sweetness bears, till, giving birth at length,  
She shuts her tender lids, and sweetly dies.

Ye blessed children of the jocund day !  
What mean these mysteries of love and birth ?  
Caught up like solemn words by babes at play,  
Who know not what they babble in their mirth.

Or of one stuff has some Hand made us all,  
Baptised us all in one great sequent plan,  
Where deep to ever vaster deep may call,  
And all their large expression find in man ?

Flowers climb to birds, and birds and beasts to man,  
And man to God, by some strong instinct driven ;

And so the golden ladder upward ran,  
Its foot among the flowers, its top in heaven.

All lives man lives ; of matter first, then tends  
To plants, an animal next unconscious, dim,  
A man, a spirit last, the cycle ends,  
That all creation weds with God in him.

And if he fall, a world in him doth fall,  
All things decline to lower uses ; while  
The golden chain that bound the each to all,  
Falls broken in the dust, a linkless pile.

And Love's fair sacraments and mystic rite  
In Nature, that their consummation find  
In wedded hearts, and union infinite  
With the divine, of married mind with mind,

Foul symbols of an idol temple grow,  
And sun-white Love is blackened into lust,  
And man's impure doth into flower-cups flow,  
And the fair Kosmos mourneth in the dust.

O Thou, out-topping all we know or think,  
Far off yet nigh, out-reaching all we see,  
Hold Thou my hand, that so the topmost link  
Of the great chain may hold, from us to Thee ;

And from my heaven-touched life may downward flow  
Prophetic promise of a grace to be ;  
And flower, and bird, and beast, may upward grow,  
And find their highest linked to God in me.

## THE MOONLIGHT PATH.

BY THE SEA.

UP to these darkling, faltering feet  
Yon path of tremulous splendour comes  
Apocalyptic, golden, sweet.

Across the deep those splendours wend,  
The deep that I must tread alone,  
Nor know its rise, nor know its end.

No mortal path, but mystic, strange,  
I seek it not, it seeketh me;  
It follows me where'er I range.

Its secret light I only see,  
To far-off eyes it seemeth dark ;  
This glory was but born with me.



In gloom I seek an unknown strand,  
My onward step is washed with fire,  
The fire of God that leads to land.

Out of the fathomless gloom I hear  
The voices of a world in pain,  
Filling the vacant atmosphere.

Infinite murmurs of despair,  
Clap of ærial hands, faint sighs,  
Sobblings and plaints and moaning prayer.

‘Is there no light for these?’ I cry;  
‘This narrow path suffices not;  
Light for my loved, or else I die!’

In vain! Between two nights I tread  
The lane of light, Thy feet, O Christ,  
Walking the sea across it shed.

‘Then hither, share this radiance sweet;  
The growing shadow of the wave  
Here breaks in splendour at your feet.’

‘Nay, where thou art but gloom we mark ;  
And if perchance we loose thy hand,  
We fear to falter in the dark.’

‘Ah me ! Ah me ! Ye say but true ;  
This path, that broadens to the verge,  
Here is not wide enough for two.’

Out of the fathomless gloom again  
Sweeps o’er bowed head and darkened heart  
The voices of a world in pain.

Infinite wailings of despair,  
Clap of ærial hands, low moans,  
Sobblings and plaints and fruitless prayer.

‘Is there no light, no hope for these ?  
Must I walk lonely in the light,  
And these be lost on darkened seas ?’

Then like a long low beam of light,  
That makes the chilliest fog-drop burn,  
A voice came falling through the night :

No soul is born, no eye looks forth,  
But with it born this path of light,  
Its splendid heritage from birth.

The darkest feet that saddest wend,  
By this long charity of light,  
Are golden-linked to God our end.

To thee 'tis dark where'er thou roam,  
But each this hidden radiance knows,  
That sweet, persistent, calls him home.

Ah, look ! this deep, where shadows meet,  
Is crossed by myriad tracks of fire,  
Bright beckoning hands and gleaming feet.

Nor only so, ah, narrow heart !  
Couldst thou but broaden out thy gaze,  
Bid thy mortality depart,

Then, swept on thy enraptured soul,  
Yon sea would into splendour burst,  
Baptised in light from pole to pole.

## THE EAGLE.

BEHOLD, an eagle awaking to jubilant life  
In the mighty prime of a young creation's morn,  
Awaking to life upon a stupendous crag  
Of some limitless lone Australasian continent.  
Lo, as he opens his blue-filmed eyes on the sun,  
From the shadowless height of the granite beaten with  
    noon,  
Unknowing of aught but the callow life in his veins,  
Can he know what it is, that burning pain of the light,  
Strong pain that quivers and flashes through all his  
    nerves ?  
Nought knows he of eagle vision fed on the light ;  
Nought of the bounteous wideflowing garb of the day,  
As knotted in fire, divine insupportable fire,  
Ever it hangs round the mighty shoulders of Him,

The immutable Angel of thunder, of change, of the  
world,

Immutable though his swift sphere still change to his  
touch ;

Nought would he know but pain, unquenchable pain.

Yea, though unblenching he gazed with quivering  
nerves,

Striving to pierce the unknown heart of the wonder,

The inscrutable cause of all his ceaseless distress,

Would not the answer remorseless come back still as  
pain,

Pain peeled back from the heart of the pitiless glory,

Pain of ineffable light that smites into darkness ?

O man ! O humanity ! O thou my brother !

Made with thy soul to mirror the infinite light,

Creature of God, of a day, outlived by the fragilest  
flower,

Converging the limitless ocean of light to a point !

Canst thou put on the glory of all that is,

And not quiver, not faint, not know it as infinite  
pain ?

As wrong, as failure, as death, as ceasing to be,  
Which yet is the unexpressed glory, the wonder that is,  
This vesture of large-limbed Gods that o'erwhelmeth  
thee,

Falling in folds majestic of sunset and dawn  
About thy death agony, mocked with ironical beams.  
Yea, they who after long searchings have found her at  
length,

Glory's ineffable self, the Unspeakable,  
Dizzied and maddened by her insupportable light,  
Have fallen down blind in the dark of the blaze at  
her feet,  
Crying, 'We know not, yea, and never can know.'

Ah, pitiful eyelids ! creeds of mankind ! dear white  
faiths !

Too soon, ah, too soon have we parted with you, too  
soon

Have lifted our eyes to That no man may behold  
And live, but his heart is rent and shattered by  
lightning.

Drop pitiful, healing, again o'er our strained eyes,

Let in the light in soft dreams and visions of night,  
Fleeting forms that embody for us the immutable  
truth ;

Till in the eagle flight of our deathless course,  
We are able to bear the awful light of what is.

## A PORTRAIT.

*To S. A.*

A FACE I met among a London crowd,  
That present, yet seemed absent, with a light  
Of other worlds slow breaking through the eyes  
When for a moment's space he looked our way ;  
Pale-hued as frescoes faded with the sun,  
The high bald brows with a dark skull-cap crowned,  
A face I knew was strange yet seen before.  
And through the idle buzz of this and that,  
I moved perplexed among a phantom crowd,  
Dim glimmerings of old-world consciousness,  
And strange weird visitings of former states,  
That lie below the deep-sea springs of thought ;  
Forgotten things still aching to be known,  
Like drownèd cities wavering up confused  
With sea-bent beams.    Until at length some door,



Touched by a groping hand all unawares,  
Flew open, and let in upon the will  
The long-forgotten thing I vainly sought.

Far hence, high up among the Southern Alps,  
A little chapel with its dead is seen,  
Set in the lonely stillness of the hills,  
Most like a mother keeping watch beside  
Her sleeping children with unsleeping love.  
The mountain pastures fair come rippling down  
About its crumbling walls, and on the graves  
Break soft in rainbow-tinted foam, and crown  
The fading memories with fadeless flowers,  
Making death beautiful with life. Hard by  
A brook brings down the freshness of the hills,  
Flinging its silver fringes o'er the stones  
In wayward ecstasies of hill-born joy,  
And makes the silence audible about it.  
And all the place is sweet with sun warmed pines,  
Their sun-struck pillars keen against the dark  
Of woven boughs, and all the valley side  
Seen purpling through them into mountain bloom.

And to its lowly door a little path  
Comes swerving up through bruised hillside balms,  
Trodden by meek and weary men and women,  
That hither come to lean their tired hearts  
Against the Eternal Love, and patient rest  
A little at His feet.

A humble place

Unvisited, and by the world unknown,  
Yet on its whitewashed walls some hand of old—  
Haply the angel-monk's within whose dim  
And cloistered thoughts God and His saints still  
walked

In glory up and down—had painted there  
The Master teaching, and a sunburnt group  
Of peasants listening to His words intent  
With level gaze, while from the calm sad brow  
And calmly parted lips calm wisdom flowed,  
Washing life clear, touching its tangled chords,  
Misknown till came the Hand that strung their fires,  
To Heaven-sent airs. And all the mountain side  
Seems listening with the group entranced there ;  
Listen the solemn upward-pointing pines ;

Listen the lizards basking on the wall's  
Hot, sun-bleached stones ; listen the mountain  
flowers,

With the sweet, dim, uncomprehending looks  
Of little children sitting hushed and still  
In consecrated places. Listening ever  
They stand, those silent shadows on the wall,  
When the East window drinks the first grey light,  
To when the setting sun incarnadines  
His slanted spear within a martyr's heart ;  
While men and women idly pass and go  
Like phantoms round them, till they seem the real,  
Clothed on with the immutability  
Of the eternal hills, and all things else  
But passing shows.

But on the right of them,  
Skirting the group, an empty space is seen.  
Still to this day the simple peasants say,  
One night the storm was loud upon the hills,  
And the wet pine-boughs swashed against the panes  
The rain broke in and wrought that vacant place ;  
But now I know thy face, thy form was there

I met by chance among the London crowd ;  
Nor wholly yet the listening look intent  
Had died from out of thy mild eyes, the head  
A little forward bent as though to catch  
Some fading breath of far-off harmonies  
Our duller sense was all too gross to hear.

Ah, wherefore didst thou leave the listening group  
With Christ and beauty on the mountain side ?  
Leave the cool silence of the morning skies,  
And evening wells of gold in herby hollows,  
Where the blue shadows lengthening love to linger ;  
And all the flowery sun-slopes lifted joy,  
To mingle with the loud distressful roar  
Of human life that thunders through our streets,  
Or wake at night to the uneasy silence  
Of the great city in its broken sleep,—  
Silence that is not silence to the heart,  
But unheard groans and wailings of despair ;  
Haunting the harsh discordant ways of men,  
Beset with ills not thine the force to stem  
That drown the finer voices of thy soul

And leave thee orphaned of melodious joys,  
Till thou a vexèd shadow among men  
Dost grow and fade perceptibly away  
From all that is to that which only seems.

Ah, yet methinks, ere that may be, ere yet  
Beneath our worldling touch thy wings are bruised,  
And all thy strange, unearthly beauty slain,  
Our wrangling marts will know that still lit face  
No more ; but thou wilt upward flit from us,  
And silently resume thine olden place,  
Still kept for thee among the listening group ;  
And as a great grave eagle spreads his wings  
For flight, and springing upwards to the light,  
The huge world reels away from him, and swoons  
With all its lessening cities into mist,  
So all the sounding nothingness of men  
Will fade and die from off thy listening soul,  
And leave thee standing face to face with Truth.

BORMUS.<sup>1</sup>

## A LINUS SONG.

. . . . . *λίνον δ' ὑπὸ καλὸν χεῖθε*  
*Λεπταλέη φωνή.—Il. xviii. 571.*

Down from the lifted cornfield trips  
 The child with ripe red-berried lips,  
 The radiant mountain boy with eyes  
     Blue as wet gentians in the shade,  
 His golden hair all wet with heat,  
     Limp as the meadow-gold new laid ;  
 And as a russet fir-cone brown,  
     An earthen pitcher gaily swings  
 Upon his little shoulder borne,  
     Water to fetch from sunless springs ;  
 And while the flowers his bare feet brush  
 Loud sings he like a mountain thrush.

<sup>1</sup> See Note 1 at the end of the book.

Ah cornflowers blue and poppies red,  
Weep, for our little Love is dead.

By paths that through sweet hay new mown  
Like hillside brooks come leaping down,  
Past silver slabs of morning, where  
    The wet crags flash the sunlight back,  
Past the warm runnels in the grass,  
    Whose course the purple orchids track,  
And down the shining upland slopes,  
    And herby dells all dark with pine,  
Incarnate gladness, leaps the child,  
    Still singing like a bird divine,  
His little pattering sunburnt feet  
With bruised meadow spikenard sweet.

Ah cornflowers blue and poppies red,  
Weep, for our little Love is dead.

Too soon, ah me, too bitter soon  
He reached the dell unsunned at noon,

Where in long flutes the water falls  
    Into a deep and glimmering pool,  
And struck from out the dripping rocks  
    The silver water sparks all cool  
Spangle the chilly cavern-dark,  
    And clear-cut ferns green fringe the gloom,  
And with continuous sound the air  
    Trembles, and all the still perfume,—  
Here came the child for water chill,  
The sultry reapers' thirst to still.

Ah cornflowers blue and poppies red,  
Weep, for our little Love is dead.

‘Hither, come hither, thou fair child,’  
Loud sang the water voices wild,  
‘Come hither, thou delightful boy,  
    And tread our cool translucent floors,  
Where never scorching heats may come,  
    Nor ever wintry tempest roars ;  
Nor the sharp tooth of envious age  
    May fret thy beauty with decay,



And thou grow sad mid wailful men ;  
But in thy deathless spring-time stay,  
Made one with our eternal joy,  
For ever an immortal boy.'

Ah cornflowers blue and poppies red,  
Weep, for our little Love is dead.

He dipped his pitcher o'er the brink,  
About it dimpling sunlights wink,  
The smooth rill fills its darkling throat  
With hollow tinklings mounting shrill  
And shriller to its thirsty lip ;  
But sweeter, wilder, louder still  
The water voices ringing sing ;  
And beckon him, and draw him down  
The cool-armed silver-wristed nymphs,  
His warm lips with cold kisses crown ;  
And to their chilly bosoms prest,  
He sinks away in endless rest.

Ah cornflowers blue and poppies red,  
Weep, for our little Love is dead.

But still in the warm twilight eves,  
Threading the lone moon-silvered sheaves,  
Or where in fragrant dusky heaps  
    The dim-seen hay cool scents emits,  
The boy across the darkening hills  
    Bearing his little pitcher flits,  
With feet that light as snowflakes fall,  
    Nor, passing, stir the feathered grass ;  
And sings a song no man may know,  
    Of old forgotten things that pass,  
And Love that endeth in a sigh,  
And beauty only born to die.

Blue cornflowers weep, red poppies sigh,  
For all we love must ever die.

## THE SONG.

Birth too and death, slumber and wakefulness, motion and immobility, crowned majesty and squalid filth, discordant clamour and the voice of gods.—EMPEDOCLES.

## I.

AN atom of air still hither and thither swung,  
 Hither and thither tossed and aimlessly flung,  
 Never at rest on the breath of a passionate song,  
 A passionate song of love and triumph o'er wrong,  
 Poured from the trembling lips of the singer afire,  
 Leaping like flame from the golden heart of the lyre,  
 A passionate song of triumph !

## II.

And ever it mused :

By what law of my being perplexed and confused  
 Am I tossed thus idly about, nor suffered to rest,  
 Now in the gulf of the billow and now on its crest,

Hither and thither moved by a Hand in the dark,  
Ever to random shocks a wandering mark,  
Ever impelled by forces that lie without  
In a dance of death that ends in confusion and doubt,  
A rhythm of loss, an upward life in defeat,  
The onward turned back on its self with death for its  
beat.

## III.

And it searched out the laws of vibration, the bound  
and th' impact  
Now swift and now slow; and patiently traced out  
each fact  
Of its being, how atom with atom ever must meet,  
And the limits which still each upward movement  
defeat—  
Impassable law that limits the freedom of each.  
And still as far as the utmost science could reach  
Impulse it found in the lock of mechanical law,  
Nought in it all but a backward and forward saw,  
Opposite motions that ever each other defeat,  
Barren of progress or plan, left still incomplete.

## IV.

But the song, the passionate song of triumph and love,  
That yet all the while like a living shuttle it wove,  
The passionate song of love and triumph o'er wrong,  
That conditioned the laws of its wonderful life all  
    along,  
It knew not nor heard. For it was but a finite part ;  
And the song is the infinite whole, the throb of a  
    Heart,

## THE SEA-KING.

## A ROCK IN SARK.

WHO wrought thee to this semblance of a king,  
    Wresting from Thor his hammer and his tool,  
Making Olympian lightnings, fashioning  
    Thy granite heart with awful thunder shocks  
To this majestic shape of kingly rule ?  
    Who placed thee on thy throne of shattered rocks,  
With fateful hands of empire laid asleep  
    Upon thy mighty knees, thy stony gaze,  
    Thwart which the centuries drift past like haze,  
For ever set across a moaning sea ?

The sea-birds flap thee with their storm-wet wing,  
    Thy calm confusing with tempestuous cries ;  
The thunder cloud, in darkness gathering,  
    Breaks on thy granite neck her groaning heart,

And pours in torrents from thy hollow eyes ;  
The stinging foam swirls ever up athwart  
Thy steadfast gaze, and blinds thee with its brine ;  
Grey winter rains across an empty sea  
Lash thee with storm ; but still immutably  
Thou ever keep'st that sleepless watch of thine.

What dost thou look for o'er the sea's moist ways,  
What seest thou at eve, or morning prime ?  
The birth of slow large stars that stand agaze  
With thee, as one who tells an ancient tale  
With one who listening dies to new-born time ?  
The moon's first level splendours trembling pale,  
That brim the low sea-caves, slow silvering  
Their wash of darkling waters ? Or of old  
The sun, who spreads for thee a path of gold,  
And bids thee rise and come away, O King ?

Nay, none of these ! Thy far-off gaze doth fall  
Across them, as of one who stares, nor sees,  
Waiting a presence from beyond them all ;  
A Light of which they but faint shadows give,

A splendour born of Love, completing these,  
The morn's new birth, fulfilment of the eve.  
Thyself a king, thou lookest for a king,  
To reconcile the dawn, still falsified  
By wrong's rude night—beneath his sceptre wide  
Love, light, and life made one in endless spring.

Above thy head the great stars wax and wane,  
Beneath thy feet, a deep that ever moans,  
The wasteful effort of the wave, the vain  
Slow toil that never overtakes its end ;  
About thy ears, the immemorial tones  
Of sea-sung litanies, and chaunts that blend  
In some forgotten tongue their solemn psalm,  
And mournful rise to unresponsive skies ;  
A Patience of the rock that never dies,  
Through all thine expectation waits in calm.

O Hope that holds the centuries in fee,  
Linking near ill to far-off good for men,  
And slighting regent wrong ; dumb prophecy  
That grasp'st the open purpose of the world,



Still writ too large for narrow human ken  
In characters from age to age unfurled ;  
Tranced in some ecstasy of thought, I scan  
Thy thunder-stricken features, till they fade  
Invisible to sense, and in thy stead  
I gaze upon the marrèd face of Man.

Like thee he looketh for a King to reign ;  
No centuries beguile him of his hope,  
Nor congregated wrongs can make it vain,  
That ever break to rise again, and mock  
The power that strives with sovereign ill to cope.  
His shattered hope re-forms from every shock,  
Weakness invincible of the divine,  
Weak as a wave, yet stronger than the stone,  
As still across his life's confusèd moan,  
He waiteth for a King to rise and shine.

Lo, Superstition, Science, Art, each cries,  
' Me thine allegiance give, the rightful sway,'  
Perplexed he clasps their knees, yet from his eyes  
The longing dies not out, the inner dole ;

Discrowned they stand at last, no word have they  
To charm the deep disorder of his soul.  
Not till His coming steps in earthquake beat  
The trembling earth, man's rightful Majesty,  
Not until then, O King, will thou and he  
Arise, and leap in thunder to His feet.

## TWO VOICES.

ABOVE my head, a tideless deep of blue,  
Beneath my feet a deep that ever grew.

Two voices on my dreaming ear were borne,  
One full of ecstasy, and one forlorn.

The one, the storm-tost sea-mew's plaining cry,  
And mocking laugh at all beneath the sky.

Cry of the broken wave, the high endeavour,  
That, climbing to its height, sinks baffled ever.

Voice of the weird sea-paths, that winding run  
Across the lonely deep, out to the sun ;

Then suddenly break off and disappear,  
Nor reach the light, nor lead they anywhere.

Dirge of the bitter springs that bubbling burst,  
Tempting the parchèd lips, to slay with thirst.

Wail of sad Love, that to her sun-white breast  
Clasps the cold rock that flings her back unblest.

Voice of the Sea whose murmur never wanes,  
Heard in the fruited bough, in vernal rains ;

Persistent undertone of life, faint breaths,  
That breathe adieu ! adieu ! and still are death's.

Wail of the shipwrecked life, the sea-deep torn,  
Of lifted hands, and hearts that sink forlorn.

The other, linking with its glittering chains  
Those broken cries, the sky-lark's jubilant strains.

Voice of the cornfields where the children roam,  
Whose many winding pathways all lead home.

Shout of the gold of God in harvests given,  
The living bread that cometh down from heaven.

Song of the clover-fields, close sweets that lie  
Safe stored from all but honeyed heart and eye.

Hymn of the morn that cometh after night,  
The dark's negation still affirming light.

Hymn of the eve, still dew, the starry deep,  
The Voice that breathes, 'It is enough ; now sleep.'

Song of our Dead, that high in glory walk,  
Heard in the pauses of our loved home talk.

Voice of the light, and heaven's own ecstasies,  
The loosened passion of the silent skies.

O voices twain, I find you both for ever,  
In this deep heart of mine that resteth never.

A deep of pain it is, a deep of light,  
I know not whether most 'tis sad or bright.

For but to say that I am glad again,  
Is still to find me face to face with pain.

And but to plead no end to life's dull ache,  
Is for the bright eternal morn to break.

My sweetest uses spring from saddest tears,  
My cloud-born glory sun and tempest wears.

And still my sphere is rolled from dark to light,  
Now spins in day, now thunders through the night.

And still two voices to my heart are given,  
One of the moaning deep, and one of heaven.

Sark : 1875.

## A WAVE.

O BEING in thy dissolution known  
Most lovely then ;  
O Life that ever has to die alone,  
To live again ;  
O bounding Heart that still must bow and break  
To touch thine end ;  
O broken Purpose that must failure take,  
And deathward bend,  
For the great tide to stretch from rock to rock  
His shining way ;  
O wandering Will that from the furthest shock  
Of sea-deeps grey,  
Silver constraint of secret light on high  
Leads safe to shore ;  
O living Rapture that dost inly sigh,  
And evermore

Within thy joy the wailful voices keep ;  
    I see thee now,  
O Son of the unfathomable deep !  
    And trembling know  
The crownèd Shadow of man's opposites,  
    The forces dread  
That sway him into being, blanched with lights  
    Of thunder bred ;  
A poised Passion wrought from central breath  
    Of whirling storms,  
And evermore a deathless life in death,  
    That still re-forms.

And thou, man's prototype in varying moods,  
    Didst lonely beat  
The vacant shores and speechless solitudes  
    With silver feet,  
Through the great æons wandering forlorn  
    In search of him,  
As rose and fell like vacant flames, lone morn  
    And evening dim,



Ere light had grown articulate in love,  
Or silence knew  
Herself as worship. Then didst thou ever move  
Beneath the blue,  
An incommunicable mystery,  
About thy shore ;  
A visible yearning of the earth and sea,  
That evermore  
Flung out white arms to catch at some far good  
Yet unfulfilled,  
And failing sobbed and sank in solitude  
With heart unstilled ;  
A voice that ever crying as of old  
In deserts dumb,  
With hollow tongue reverberate foretold  
A Life to come.

## LEAVES.

LEAFLET ! leaflet !

Curving to thy lovely limits  
In a cool and peaceful dream,  
Like a silver-fringed ripple,  
Greening to the wet sea-beam ;  
By some hidden law conditioned  
Into individual grace,  
In green brotherhoods of beauty  
Binding all your lovely race.

Leaflet ! leaflet !

With your gracious tender mouldings,  
Dimpled like an infant's palm,  
Ever spread in sweet beseechings  
For the sun and cool dew's balm,  
And the charity heaven-breathing  
Of the falling summer rain ;

Cool as mothers' healing kisses  
Falling on our fevered pain ;  
Sweeping o'er our hands and foreheads  
In some quiet woodland place,  
Tender as the last sad touches  
Of our dying on our face.

Leaflet ! leaflet !

Such a tender thing to look at,  
Yet with some strange power in thee  
To unlock the world's great forces  
With the sunbeam's golden key,  
Power that, loosened from thy child-clasp,  
Th' avalanche would toss with ease  
Back to his high Alpine cradle,  
Where the printless snowdrifts freeze.

Leaflet ! leaflet !

With your cool palms shaping ever  
Out of the invisible,  
Out of sun-illuminated azure,  
Hearts of oak that giant swell, .  
And the great pine's porphyry pillar  
Reddening with the last red ray ;

In your green and golden leisure,

Babbling like a child at play.

Leaflet ! leaflet !

Dear divinest gracious weakness,

Strong through the invisible,

Strong through laying hold of forces

That unseen about you dwell ;

Mighty builders of God's temple,

Who is Light and Who is Power,

Your green guilds for ever rearing,

Through the drowsy summer hour,

Lovely aisle and branching archway,

And cool crypts of morning dew,

With the high clere-story windows

Of the noontide's burning blue ;

Rising into silent worship,

Like the temple built of old,

Without sound of axe or hammer,

Rising like a cloud of gold

Into shapes of awful beauty,

Breathless with the breath of God ;

Ever building through the ages  
Earth her ancient round has trod,  
Laying down your lives by myriads,  
So your work may live and grow,  
Bearing each your part unknowing  
In the whole too vast to know ;  
Then in golden consummation  
Falling like a falling star,  
While the autumn winds their requiem,  
Breathe above you from afar.

Leaflet ! leaflet !

We like you are builders ever  
Of an unseen temple vast,  
Building in each high endeavour,  
Building in the silent past,  
Now a shrine and now a gargoyle,  
Living stone on stone laid still,  
All without a sound arising  
To the master-builder's will :  
Every marble pillar built up  
Of a million million lives,

And the sweep of age-long arches,  
As it ever upward strives ;  
Till the little part is finished,  
That to the vast whole we lend ;  
Then with you we fall together,  
And together touch our end,  
Leaflet ! leaflet !

## THE NIGHT AFTER DEATH.

HEART of my heart !

How shall I greet thee ere I sleep this night,

In that strange far-off land where thou art gone ?

My lips, that faltered not in dark or light

For tender balms with which to soothe thy spirit's  
moan,

Falter for some high speech and infinite,

In which to utter sweetness where thou art,

Dear Heart.

Bid thee good-night ?

As, when the lamps put out, we stood alone

In the enchanted dusk one moment yet,

And kissed, with hands that locked our lives in one,

' Good-night,' then on the wish one last kiss set.

Ah, Love ! there is no night where thou art gone,  
That I should wish thee in thy perfect light,  
‘ Good-night.’

Bid thee ‘farewell,’  
Farewell, my Love, farewell for ever now ?  
To thee to whom our utmost well were ill ;  
Who farest now where living waters flow,  
With One whose words flow o’er thy spirit still,  
And wash life’s fever from thee, and the woe  
For which our love could never find the spell,  
‘ Farewell.’

Or shall I sigh,  
Sleep sweet, dear Heart, sleep sweet for evermore ?  
Who needest not to pay away to Death  
One half thy day to keep him from thy door ;  
But, gazing into the unknown Beneath,  
And bathing in the deep Beyond, dost soar,  
And sing and shine in endless ecstasy  
On high.



Or shall I greet

Thee thus : 'God bless thee as thou blessedst me?'

Thou whose great light of blessing even now  
Has struck me blind, so that I cannot see

Thy face, nor find thy hand, nor touch, nor know,  
And darkened all my days with loss of thee.

My blessing would but touch and dim thy feet,  
My Sweet.

O Love, my Love !

A beggar girl, I stand alone, ah me !

Alone upon thy palace steps, with all  
My faded violets, that once to thee

Were sweet, but sickening now at evenfall,  
Smell but of all my want and misery,

While empty hands I stretch to thee, my Love,  
My Love !

## THE CONTRAST.

ὦ φίλος,

ὃ τὸν ἀεὶ κατὰ γῆς σκότον εἰμένους.—Sophocles.

LOVE ! Love ! Love !

The Spring is calling to the earth

In odorous sighings, and the birth

Of quick warm tears, and kisses heard

When April clouds have wept their fill,

And all the budding woods are still.

Lo, every secret grove is stirred,

As, o'er the cornfield's tender green,

Her twinkling feet are hurrying seen ;

And Love ! Love ! Love ! she calleth ever

By copse and croft and frozen river,

Love ! Love ! Love !

The earth is thrilling to the voice

That bids all things rejoice ! rejoice !

The blind dust yearning to the light,

Bursts into myriad flowery eyes  
By beechen roots and grassy rise,  
    With silent adoration bright ;  
And kindling at the Master's name,  
The copse is fledged with delicate flame,  
A windblown splendour of the sod,  
Burning, yet not consumed, with God.

Love ! Love ! Love !  
The brown grub hiding underground  
Hears in his dark the potent sound,  
    And quickens at his dreaming heart ;  
Twin glories spread on either side,  
With the forgotten sunshine dyed.  
And now no more he dwells apart,  
No more can darkness tread him down,  
A life beyond the grave now grown,  
A wandering thought of love become,  
He soars—the light his vast sweet home.

Love ! Love ! Love !  
The bird is piping in the brake,  
'Awake, dear hearts, awake, awake !

For life is pleasant on the bough,  
While bright eyes watch him from the nest,  
A brooding wonder at her breast.

But life must answer love, and now  
The pearly caskets open spring,  
And soft let out the secret thing,  
And all their hidden fairy gold  
Is turned to golden songs untold.

Love ! Love ! Love !  
My heart is calling with the rest ;  
Ah, more than bird or grub unblest !  
Ah, less than stick or trodden clay !

My Dead stirs not for any sound,  
No glory lifts me from the ground ;  
No life, no voice that made my May,  
Comes back to my forsaken breast ;  
No leaves my kingly sceptre crest ;  
My deathless love, howe'er I crave,  
Wins but one answer back—a grave.

## DRIFT-WOOD.

O SEA-BLEACH'D log that in thy storm-drench'd sleep  
Liest all dark in morning shine,  
Forgotten plaything of an alien deep,  
That knows not thee, nor thine.

The ripple's long grey fold in splendour breaks ;  
Far off the sea-gleam's silver line  
Shines mystic bright; but thee no light awakes  
From that dark sleep of thine.

Yet once thy long-lost boughs did live and sing,  
And from thy passionate heart, sun fed,  
A thousand verdant fancies burst in spring,  
And garlanded thy head.

Fresh dews were thine, the morning's glittering glee ;  
With thee the shy birds housed unseen,

And sang of their delicious loves to thee,  
    Wrapped in thy secret green.

But now, flung by wild storms upon the shore,  
    No thought of greenness thou dost keep,  
But a sea strangeness crusts thee o'er and o'er,  
    Weird fancies of the deep.

Dost thou remember, O remember aught  
    Of sunny days that once were thine?  
And dumbly crave the light, the warmth, in thought,  
    Like this sad heart of mine?

Seems the mild murmur of the twilight sea  
    The sougning of the evening breeze,  
That rocked thy nestlings, and awoke in thee  
    Old sea-like melodies?

And rustle round thee, then, thy leafy eaves,  
    As when they bloomed in summer bowers,  
And purpling thro' thy rain-illuminated leaves,  
    Gathered the summer showers?

And dost thou, as the vision fades, then know  
The desolation of the light,  
The piercing sense of all that is of woe  
By all that was of bright ?

Like thee my bough is bare, it wears no green,  
Me storms have overthrown, O tree !  
The touch of shipwrecked hands on me hath been,  
Who failed them too like thee.

And yet, tho' not for thee the olden bloom  
Haply upon some human hearth  
Thou'lt brightly glow, and lend the winter gloom  
A quiet household mirth.

And haply too the storm-wrecked life may bring  
To some dark hearts a summer glow ;  
And wake in some sad home a light of spring,  
It never more may know.

*May 1868.*

## VALE! VALE!

LET me go hence !

No leaf but babbles of my hidden grief,  
 And makes it common. Every hedgeway thorn  
 Is sharp with it. The very buds unborn  
 As soon as opened have it in their eyes ;  
 And my own footprints, seeking vain relief,  
 Meet me in sandy lane, by chalky rise,  
 And round again on what their anguish flies—

Let me go hence !

Let me go hence,

O woods and fields, all haunted with my Dead !  
 Your woodbines beckon up a thought of him ;  
 Your dusky gorse's crusted gold is dim  
 With love departed and with farewell breath ;  
 Your sparkling seas and lovely valleys spread  
 Empty with loss in vacant light beneath  
 My feet, and all your sweetness aches with death—

Let me go hence !



Let me go hence,  
Away, away, nor any further wrong  
The soul of your fair harmless solitude,  
Quickening it with the waste of my own mood,  
Till into human pain it sickens fast ;  
Nor wake at dead of night to hear along  
Your ghostly cliffs, in pauses of the blast,  
The sobbings of the unreturning past—  
Let me go hence !

Let me go hence !  
And down your deep moon-haunted lanes again,  
In the warm dusk with glimmering whitethorn sweet,  
Lovers will pass with happy lingering feet,  
And trail the evening star, by Love held dear,  
Thro' your dark leaves ; or from one kiss refrain,  
Feeling some tender trouble in the air,  
To cry 'Tread soft, some heart has suffered here.'  
Let me go hence !

## LOVE AND SLEEP AND DEATH.

THOU com'st to me in dreams again  
In that still land our days enfold ;  
Lit by our old dead suns, and where  
Our fading wests still keep their gold.

Strange under-world that rounds our sphere,  
And into which our lights go down ;  
And all our sunken splendours set,  
To rise again yet fairer grown.

Land of the heart that knows no graves,  
Shaped by the soul that knows not death ;  
Where but to love is still to be,  
And drink again life's sweetest breath. •

Ah, Love, thou com'st to me unchanged !  
 The hand is warm I clasp in mine ;  
 I kiss no death dew on thy lip,  
 No grave-chill wrongs that touch of thine.

No look, no hint of other worlds,  
 Confuses me in thy kind eyes ;  
 Only the old familiar love  
 That made my sun at midnight rise.

The awful Shadow that still seems  
 To blot us out beneath God's skies,  
 Light as the shadow of a bird  
 From our large life runs off and dies.

Again we walked the woods and fields,  
 And paused beside the pleasant farms ;  
 And trod the sweet, gay-scented paths,  
 Alone, with happy love-linked arms.

Again the chestnut spread her palms  
 Of benediction o'er our head ;

And birds for love dipped their sweet songs  
Within our sweeter hearts, love fed.

And in the mystic heart of woods  
We sat again, as once, and heard  
The ghostly footsteps pattering by,  
And strange leaf-mutterings stirred ;

And sudden sobbings of the breeze,  
That with a passion shook the wood ;  
Then died in infinite farewells  
Upon the murmurous solitude.

And there I sang to thee the songs,  
Where thine and mine no death can part ;  
And into thy glad breast shook out  
The sweetness of my woman's heart.

The same, and yet, ah, not the same !  
Something was changed, I knew not whence :  
Our love had gained some growth of tears,  
A sad, divine significance ;

An aching tenderness that sobbed  
Against the doors of speech, and lo,  
From all the windows of my soul  
Looked forth with angel eyes aglow.

Something I did not understand,  
I breathed but a diviner air ;  
Some veil of life was rent, and all  
. Love's dear divinity lay bare.

I could not look at thy dear face,  
But straight God's dew baptised it there ;  
I could not utter thy loved name,  
But still it seemed an answered prayer.

Our commonest act—the food we shared—  
Grew sacramental to my soul ;  
Thy lightest touch, thine idlest word,  
Long lonely years of pain made whole.

Love, by some pain as deep as He,  
Some lone, dread, agonistic strife,

Now knew himself as Love indeed,  
And Death but as an added life.

And in that strange new glory set,  
My lightest fault I could not bear ;  
But, falling on thy neck, I cried :  
'Forgive that e'er I grieved thee, Dear.'

Then didst thou bow thy lips on mine,  
And, in that rapture of held breath,  
I woke, and knew by its great light  
My love had seen the face of Death.

## ON A WHITE BUTTERFLY.

THOU exquisite frail thing of life and light,  
That tak'st with sudden ecstasy my sight !

Art thou some flower enamoured of a star,  
That in some pause of woodland leaves each night  
Shone mildly on her from afar ?

And loving so, and yearning so all day,  
And having prayed, one early dawn in May,  
Her simple soul grew loose to earth that bore  
Her whiteness, heavenward floating soft away,  
And her green place knew her no more.

Thou exquisite white flower-soul ! what place may be  
'Mid the rude forces of our world for thee,  
That split the frozen crag with winter wan,  
And pour the sounding cataracts of the sea,  
And shatter the deep heart of man ?

Nay, the great world grows tender for thy sake,  
All things for thee a finer issue take ;  
The blast that rends the pine and sways the deep,  
Tames his rude hand to rock thy leaf, nor break  
The cradle of thy honeyed sleep.

The storm whose breath along the hillside smokes,  
And all the sunburnt valleys drenching soaks,  
Spare the light dust upon thy wing ; and fleet  
Dread thunderbolts, that blanch the heart of oaks,  
Drop harmless at thy feeble feet.

Fearless thou launchest forth when loud winds roar,  
Safe when our mighty ships are seen no more,  
Sailing the treacherous ocean of the air ;  
Thy light skiff shoots from flowery shore to shore ;  
For thee the winds are always fair.

Each flower to thee glad recognition flings,  
Kissing the freckled inward of thy wings ;  
The rose for thee a bridal bed of old  
Makes of her bosom's crimson curtainings,  
Thy dower all her secret gold.



Thou fallen blossom from the Tree of Life,  
Drifted into a world with gravestones rife  
By some chance air across the Guarded Gate,  
With our mortality at joyous strife,  
With thine own paradise elate.

Was it a wonder holy men of old,  
As yet our streets were paved with heavenly gold,  
With pious care inscribing ancient lore,  
Lit with thy poised loveliness untold  
Some stern old prophet-truth of yore ?

Faint with the centuries, man's ancient trust  
And hope divine seem written in the dust ;  
New science bids him hug a phantom show,  
Nor the divinity within him trust,  
Nor aught of deathless being know.

But fresh as in the primal morn thou art,  
With the immortal in us taking part ;  
Thy wing's light flicker flouts at Death o'erbold,  
Uttering the glad resurgam of our heart,  
The dear white joyous faiths of old.

Methinks that God has set His weakest thing,  
In loving scorn, refusal glad to fling  
At all our human wisdom that denies ;  
And with our dear Hope weighted thy frail wing  
For that loved dust that silent lies.

Token thou art of God's great tenderness,  
Fresh courage giving me to live and bless,  
Trusting my dear ones unto Him to save,  
Who tempers all things to thy feebleness,  
Nor left thee in the silent grave.

Goodbye, sweetheart ! light-winged thou dost depart,  
Divinest lessons leaving in my heart,  
Love, victor over Doubt and Death at length.  
For one of the weak things of God thou art,  
Stronger than man in all his strength.

## GREEN GRAVES.

Not the summer rain that falleth,  
Slipping from its purple sheath,  
With the freshness of the meadows  
Borne upon its heaven-sweet breath ;  
Not the warm drops green leaves gather,  
Dipping their cool dimpled palms  
In the runnels of the shower,  
Till some rush of loosened balms  
From the windward field-beds blowing,  
Shakes the sun-struck jewels down,  
Pattering on the churchyard dock leaves,  
With pink mallow overblown ;  
Not the dews at shut of daylight  
When from the grey dreaming tower,  
Darkly keen against the evening,  
Tolls the dim leaf-muffled hour ;

Not the moon's cool dropping silver,  
    Rippling through light aspen shade ;  
Not the dawn's unfooted freshness,  
    Pearling every tender blade ;  
Nay, not one of these, I ween,  
    Keeps our graves so fresh and green.

But a secret shower falling,  
    Ever falling night and day ;  
Tender names we never uttered,  
    Hustled in life's press away ;  
Precious words of fond affection,  
    All too late, and breathed in vain,  
Dear regrets for love unspoken,  
    Wild regrets for spoken pain ;  
Tears that wash the blindness from us,  
    Holden eyes that knew them not,  
Till great Death revealed our angels,  
    Life defaced, confused, forgot ;  
Passionate kisses never given,  
    Frozen buds all choked with snow,

Dying with their locked-up sweetness,  
Love's completeness ne'er to know ;—  
Such a precious heaven-sweet shower,  
As had made a lifetime green, ,  
Made the dead hearts burst in blossom,  
Unto them dear heaven had been ;  
Now cold rain with nought to save,  
Greening but a senseless grave.

## THE WORLD OF MIGHT-HAVE-BEENS.

OFTTIMES I fondly dream could there but be

A world betwixt this world and that Unknown,  
With its vast reaches of eternity,  
Its unimagined light, and splendours lone.

A world where broken things of Earth's delight

Might bloom again, and every 'might-have-been'  
Might be ; as chilly rains of yesternight  
But as the morning's pride of dew are seen.

A little world in the great starry sweep

Scarce seen, that rises in a rosy west,  
And trembles on the children's early sleep,  
On silver tiptoe not to break their rest.

God's casket for lost kisses, farewell breath,

Sad sighs that only shook a withered leaf,

72 THE WORLD OF MIGHT-HAVE-BEENS.

The dim sweet touches of thin hands in death,  
Heart-hungers that on earth found no relief

A little world all grassy cool, and green,  
Where feet that this world's burning marls have trod,  
Or blistered with its dewless highways been,  
Might cool themselves against the daisied sod.

Where darling buds, their lips all black with frost,  
Might balmy drink once more the warm spring rain,  
And broken eggs moss-strewn, their spring-songs lost,  
Might round into the sea-green pearl again.

And lovely souls walled up in graceless clay,  
That still contemns the angel-guest within,  
Sweet souls that never here have had their day,  
Nor lover's kiss, nor clinging child might win ;

Yet grew not sour, nor struck at hungry fate,  
But patient in their stony niche upcurled,  
Of the great human Sorrow made their mate,  
And dropped their bruised spikenards on the world.

Might they find there the joys they knew not here,  
Like friends we missed, who by some shorter way  
Got safe home first, not lost, but waiting there,  
To greet our wayworn feet with welcomes gay.

And there to meet our Dead beneath old skies,  
Not changed, but just the same ; no angel bright  
To vex with unfamiliar light the eyes  
Grown dim with weeping for them thro' the night ;

But ah, the same ; th' old hands we clasped in ours,  
Whose touch could ease life's ache and fretful strain ;  
The comfortable voice that in dark hours  
Rang out the evensong of all our pain.

Not lost in light, but set about once more  
With all the homely sweetness of our earth ;  
The old familiar fields, the sounding shore,  
Dear night and morning kisses, household mirth.

Only upon our lips the supreme kiss  
Would blossom still to guard from loveless breath



74 THE WORLD OF MIGHT-HAVE-BEENS.

The gate of life, and in our midmost bliss  
Last looks in eyes would deepen love with death.

Till every silver issue of the morn  
Broken on earth had clasped a golden end,  
And kissed a perfect rose had every thorn,  
And every friend had utmost loved with friend ;

Then like a star that lingers, glinting through,  
'Mid sweet hedge-rose and evening-lighted grass ;  
But rising beats at length the wider blue—  
To kiss, and unto other worlds to pass.

TO THE GOLDEN ALPINE  
HEARTSEASE.

DEAR HEART, I found among our English dews  
When piped the bitter north wind shrill,  
Clad like a mourner in thy purpling hues,  
Standing all dark and chill ;

All dark but for that tender hint of dawn  
About that glooming heart of thine,  
A secret spring within thy breast withdrawn,  
Ever half quenched to shine ;

Have thy sad thoughts gone golden in the light,  
That secret spring of dawn let out  
To flood thy life, since thou didst climb this height  
Above our pain and doubt ?

76 TO THE GOLDEN ALPINE HEARTSEASE

Since thou hast on the eternal whiteness gazed,  
That changeless takes no print of man,  
Love's pillar high of rosy fire upraised  
Since morn and eve began ;

Here on this Alpine pasture flowery fair,  
Sparkling and fresh with mountain rains,  
Where the cool silence of the thin sweet air  
Unbroken still remains ;

Save for the kine-bells tinkling on the hill,  
Or grasshoppers clad in viewless green,  
Clashing their little silver cymbals shrill  
In ceaseless praise unseen.

Thou and my Love all shining in the light,  
My Love who climbed the heights with thee,  
Far, far above all hills, beyond the night,  
Beyond our vexèd sea ;

And left me but a darkened memory  
With which to face the orphaned hours,  
Alone in all this sick perplexity,  
We call this life of ours.

TO THE GOLDEN ALPINE HEARTSEASE. 77

Ah, Heart, grown golden looking on the light,  
Can even such a one as I,  
A thing so wrung with anguish, bruise, and blight,  
Into thy glory die ?

This heart, the meeting-place of storms and fire,  
Where nothing green for long can live,  
One day with you and him go too up higher,  
Where peace her dews can give ?

All darkness as excess of splendour known,  
All discord known as music's might,  
One day shall we three stand, our dark thoughts  
done,  
All shining in God's light ?

## THE HIDDEN BOW.

### LINES ON THE REFLECTION OF A RAINBOW IN A LAKE.

‘ Seeing two rainbows, the one in the heavens, the other in the water, you might be disposed to infer that the one bears the same relation to the other that a tree upon the water’s edge bears to its reflected image. The rays, however, which reach the observer’s eye after reflection, and which form a bow, would, were their course uninterrupted, converge to a point vertically under the observer and as far below the level of the water as his eye is above it. But under no circumstances could an eye above the water-level and one below it see the same bow; in other words the selfsame drops of rain cannot form the reflected bow and the bow seen directly in the heavens. The reflected bow, therefore, is not the image of the bow seen in the sky.’—Dr. TYNDALL on ‘Light.’

THOU hidden Thing of God, no mortal eye  
May ere behold but in a mirror darkly,  
Not thine essential self ! No ripple stirs  
The level purples of this mountain lake,  
That holds thy jewelled secret, immanent  
In dread apocalypse beneath my feet,

The Shadow of thine unseen loveliness,  
Fresh with the dews of thine eternal youth,  
As with bowed head I worship and adore  
Love's radiant Heart in seven-hued light laid bare.

Bow of the depths, not of the sun-crowned heights !  
Set with my loved lost jewels cruel Death  
Wrung from my trembling grasp and writhen hands ;  
The glory of my Dead I seek in vain  
In constellated sun and sleepless star,  
Treading with devious foot my darkened days ;  
My hidden bow that in the secret place  
Of thunder shines, kept in high heaven for me.  
Bow of the deep dark underworld of woe,  
That underlies life's shining surfaces,  
Dim populous pain and multitudinous toil,  
Unheeded of the heedless world that treads  
Its piteous upturned faces underfoot,  
In the gay rout that rushes to its ends.  
Ah radiant unseen heart of darkest things,  
That is not dark, nor waste expense of tears,  
Nor void, but sevenfold glory of the light ;

Promise for all the broken-hearted here,  
The sad, the poor, the sinful, and despairing,  
Dark lives whose sorrow, like a caverned wave,  
Falters and sobs about its pent-in walls,  
Nor ever breaks a glory in the sun.  
Ah hidden splendour, I behold thee not !  
Where stands thy jewelled arch triumphant, lo,  
I see but leaden wrack, and beating storm,  
And the fierce light that has the keys of death.  
But once in time in this calm sea of glass,  
That Love has spread before his mountain throne,  
I have beheld, let down from heaven to earth,  
Thy secret light, and know henceforth for ever  
In darkest things the hidden Bow is there.

## THE SYMPATHY OF NATURE.

‘The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.’

SWEET Bird, that mid the sunlights of the leaf  
 Singest where hazel-tufts thy shape conceal,  
 Who told thee of this secret pain, this grief  
 That long ago both tears and words outwore,  
 Love, dead with waiting at a closed door,  
 Dumb arms outstretched in infinite appeal ?  
 Ah simple soul, I told it not to thee,  
 Yet thou hast guessed it all among the leaves,  
 Uttering it all in some sad speech divine,  
 Till from my heart it flows away to thine,  
 And thence to all the lonely dells is given  
 In plaintful tones whose sweetness dies in heaven,  
 While thy melodious heart leaf-hidden grieves,  
 Breaking for me, dear Heart, for me !



## 2

Fair Flower, that in that greening nest of thine,  
Through harmless days dost draw thy harmless  
breath,

What dost thou know of this sad heart of mine,  
This alien birth of sad humanity,  
Whose early glories were but born to die,  
That ever keeps reluctant tryst with Death ?  
Ah simple Heart, I told it not to thee ;  
Thou on th' untarnished silver of thy leaf  
Dost lightly wear the heavy centuries  
Of wrong, renewing thy young loveliness  
With every Spring, not knowing Death ; and yet  
With orient tears thy shining lids are wet,  
Through which thou look'st responsive to my grief,  
Weeping for me, dear Heart, for me !

## 3

O Cuckoo, jocund brother of the Spring,  
What knowest thou, ah thou, of wintry wrong,  
Of leafless boughs where once the heart did sing  
Among the green, all faded now and gone,

Of kindly looks chill Death has turned to stone,  
Of empty nests left desolate of song?

Ah vagrant Voice, I told it not to thee :

Yet like a distant bell thy constant note  
Tolls for the ancient Springs that are no more,  
' Farewell ! farewell ! ' it tolleth o'er and o'er,  
' Farewell,' from lifted lawn and secret dell,  
' We live in light, we love thee still, farewell ;'—  
Voice of my Loved upon the air afloat  
Thou art to me, dear Heart, to me !

## 4

O Wind, that heavy with Spring fragrance dies,  
Slow sweetening all the glades and dingles nigh,  
What dost thou know of bitter human sighs,  
Longings that never taste the fruited tree,  
And Hope a butterfly blown out to sea,  
Fainting with flight, yet settling but to die?—  
Ah spirit sweet, I told it not to thee,  
Yet hark ! mysterious murmurs blend with thine,  
Infinite whispers of some far-off good  
Stir the deep heart of the green solitude,

84            THE SYMPATHY OF NATURE.

And every leaf is seized with prophecy,  
And somewhere flights of angels sweep me by,  
As thou dost die upon the hush divine,  
Sighing for me, dear Heart, for me !

5

And O ye hills, grey woods, and far-off vale,  
That dim the gaze with too, too happy light,  
Where all life's fevered fret and toil and wail,  
And all the fading cries of fading men,  
Are drowned in azure peace beyond our ken,  
That laps your windless woods and homesteads  
white ;  
Fair Loveliness, I told it not to thee,  
Yet to my brooding sense and fancy fond  
A patient sadness holds the valleys dumb,  
A silent waiting as for things to come,  
Some open secret bringing in the day,  
And all your footless pathways lead away  
To some deep hidden bliss, a Rest beyond,  
A Home for me, dear Hearts, for me !

## THE WAYSIDE ANGEL.

DEATH, we once pictured thee a sheeted horror,  
A bloodless thing compact of bones and dust,  
On all life's fairest gold a cankering rust,  
But by our Easter suns we see thee truer ;  
Thou a familiar presence now art grown  
And as Love's white-winged messenger art known.

Sometimes thy feet are set among the lilies,  
And in the dawn we see thee passing by,  
In thy deep bosom lulling tenderly  
A sleeping child, while life falls off and sorrow,  
As from the pendant slackening finger-tips  
The bluebell or the fading primrose slips.

Or through the ripening corn at noon thou goest,  
Leading with pious care some aged feet  
Back to fresh youth, and home, and springtime sweet.

The reaper as thou passest stays his reaping  
And musing feels thy breath like softest air  
Blow cool upon his brow and lift his hair.

Or in the burning meads of June thou sittest  
Mid the sweet-scented swathes of dying flowers,  
Dying in their fresh prime of morning hours ;  
While in thy lap some fairer garden-blossom  
Of human hopes has slumbering laid her head,  
Heavy with precious dews by sad eyes shed.

Or o'er some wayworn form we see thee bending,  
Giving a draught from thy cool pitcher's brink  
From those deep wells that quench, to all who drink,  
All mortal thirst and weariness and longing ;  
And straightway the lame feet gain strength to go  
A vaster way where swiftest thought is slow.

Angel beloved of all the broken-hearted !  
Seen through thy veil old burning pains show grey  
As a forgotten lamp surprised by day ;

Life's dull-leaved book gilds as we softly close it ;  
And not the dark, we feel, but endless light  
Is Life's great end and issue infinite.

Sorrow runs to thine arms as child to mother,  
And with her hand in thine endures the night ;  
And Love before thee keeps his garments white.  
And, hallowing all, thy Presence bendeth o'er us,  
Like that faint hueless evening sky we see,  
That has the promise of the stars to be.

## TO ROBERT HERRICK.

'A funeral stone  
Or verse I covet none,  
But only crave  
Of you that I may have  
A sacred laurel springing from my grave.'

*Herrick.*

THOU sweet old poet, jocund gay,  
Fresh as an English spring-time seen,  
With her moist meadow-gleams, her grey  
Half dipped in golden green ;  
And rain-lit lanes bestrewn at warm noon-day  
With rosy dimples of the fallen May.

Thou who didst win thy daffodils  
To loose their tongues of flame, and tell  
The charm that hid thee from our ills,  
And bade sad thoughts farewell ;

The golden secret of their deathless joy  
No leaden-footed winters can destroy.

So thou and joy were boonest friends,  
Thy days had all a golden rise,  
And dying, touched on golden ends ;  
While thou beneath spring skies  
Didst fling thy careless glory down the years,  
That come to us so chill and grey with tears.

But now, thy golden eves all done,  
Thy daffodils and thou for ever  
Long since to evensong have run,  
And gone away together,  
Leaving all moist dim places of the earth  
An afterglow of all your harmless mirth ;

Hast thou thy wish, O jocund soul,  
In thy green western resting-place ?  
No weight of stone with sculptured scroll  
To crush thy breezy grace,  
And hide thee from thy daisies newly blown,  
And into blatant darkness tread thee down.



But that green monument of thine,  
A laurel tree above thy head,  
Scattering her harmless lights divine  
About thy darkened bed ;  
Or pattering silver litanies by the hour,  
As sweet as thine, beneath the falling shower,

Or haply standing mute and chill  
At the dark break of day, thy tree  
Feels through her leaves a mystic thrill,  
A wind of prophecy.  
'Lie still, dear Heart,' thy Daphne sighs to thee,  
I feel the dawn ; thy Christ comes presently.

## A GARDEN OF GIRLS.

A RUSH of maidens from a garden porch,  
All clad in virginal and festive white.  
And while I stood agaze within the lane  
At all the wonder of them, and delight,  
As strong winds pour a rush of morning blue  
Through thick-leaved trees, great joy was in me  
born ;  
'The world is young,' I cried, 'and in his prime ;  
'The golden age comes back each golden morn.'  
  
And singing, one whirled round in mazy dance,  
With palpitating feet that lightly beat  
The quivering blades as thick as thunder drops,  
When all the purpling hills are faint with heat ;  
And through her shadow swift the daisies streamed  
Like flights of meteors through a summer night ;  
While silver laughter shook the aspens hoar,  
And all the kingcups nodded with delight.

And one tossed up a history book in sport ;  
Old empires rose and fell at her sweet will  
And the rich dust of buried kings and queens  
Upon her light-aired fancy eddied still ;  
And lo, the ages' sequent toil and pain  
Were tumbled into ecstasies of May,  
And all the garnered sorrow of the world  
Flashed at her touch into a maiden's play.

And two their radiant heads together leant—  
One black as pods of broom, the other seemed  
The broom in flower—and babbled, as they strolled,  
Love-secrets from all eyes safe hidden deemed ;  
Two babbling brooks close huddled up in flowers,  
That yet unknown had slipped their covert green,  
And caught faint snatches of the starry sky,  
Of vast beyonds, and world on world unseen.

But one paused close to where I darkling stood  
Leaf-hidden—fairest she of all the band—  
And to the white shell of her ear she made  
A rosy lip with one fair lifted hand,

As rapt she listened to the nightingale,  
That in some ecstasy of love and pain,  
Broke his wing'd heart among the beechen leaves,  
And linked our souls together in the lane.

Then as he ceased, on one soft knee she fell,  
To succour some belated, weary thing—  
A little downy caterpillar 'twas,  
That piteous took those eyes of early spring,  
And from her honeysuckle finger-tips  
Outstretched to her its wavering length forlorn,  
And plaintive blind face feeling for the light,  
Till laid at rest beneath the blossoming thorn.

When sudden to her lovely height she rose,  
Spreading her sweet palms sunward to the air,  
As though the angel in her, all unknown,  
For all lost souls and sad stood suppliant there,  
Breathing a prayer too deep for consciousness ;  
For her girl lips but cried 'It rains ! run ! run !'  
And like a flight of white-winged birds they passed,  
And left me standing darkened in the sun.

But now she waits my voice, my coming step ;  
For these she listens, sweeter to her ear  
Than ever nightingale's enchanted moan ;  
And all hurt, helpless things she holdeth dear  
And in her balmy bosom stills their pain ;  
And none, to drive her from my side, may cry  
'It rains,' for in her love without a cloud  
I walk, no longer lonely, till I die.

## THE CHILDREN'S BEDTIME.

THE clock strikes seven within the hall,

    The curfew of the children's day,

To call each little vagrant foot

    From dance and song and livelong play ;

Their day that in our wider light,

Floats like a silver day-moon white,

Nor in our darkness sinks to rest,

But sets within a golden west.

Ah tender hour ! that sends a drift

    Of children's kisses through the house,

And cuckoo-notes of sweet 'Good-night,'

    That thoughts of heaven and home arouse ;

And a soft stir to sense and heart,

As when the bee and blossom part ;

And little feet that patter slower,

Like the last droppings of the shower.

And in the children's rooms aloft  
What blossom shapes do gaily slip  
Their dainty sheaths, and rosy run  
From clasping hand, and kissing lip,  
A naked sweetness to the eye,  
Blossom and babe and butterfly  
In witching one, so dear a sight !  
An ecstasy of love and light.

And ah, what lovely witcheries  
Bestrew the floor ! an empty sock,  
By vanished dance and song left loose  
As dead birds' throats ; a tiny smock,  
That sure upon some meadow grew,  
And drank the heaven-sweet rains ; a shoe  
Scarce bigger than an acorn cup,  
Frocks that seem flow'ry meads cut up.

Then, lily-dressed in angel-white,  
To mother's knee they trooping come  
The soft palms fold like kissing shells,  
And they and we go singing home ;

Their bright heads bowed and worshipping,  
As though some glory of the spring,  
Some daffodil that mocks the day,  
Should fold his golden palms and pray.

The gates of paradise swing wide  
A moment's space in soft accord,  
And those dread angels, Life and Death,  
A moment veil the flaming sword ;  
As o'er the weary world forlorn,  
From Eden's secret heart is borne,  
That breath of paradise most fair,  
By mothers called, 'the children's prayer.'

Ah deep pathetic mystery !  
The world's great woe unconscious hung  
A rain-drop on a blossom's lip,  
White innocence that woos our wrong,  
And Love divine that looks again,  
Unconscious of the cross and pain,  
From sweet child-eyes ; and in that child  
High heaven and sad earth reconciled.



Then kissed we lay them down on beds  
As fragrant white as clover sod,  
And all the upper floors grow hushed  
With children's sleep and dews of God.  
And as our stars their beams do hide,  
The stars of twilight, opening wide,  
Take up the heavenly tale at even,  
And light us home to God and heaven.

## A BACK-STREET CHILD.

FROM LIFE.

A LANE that stints God's boundless charity,  
Of open sky around, afar,  
Down to one narrow strip of changeless sky  
That scarce can hold a lingering star.

A house that like a wicked old age leers  
From casements at the passers-by,  
Opening on loveless brawls and human speech  
That fouls its own divinity.

The very walls seemed cursed with human sin,  
No Bible pictures smiling fair  
Looked down, no Saviour's face of love and grief—  
The rat ran careless riot there.

And drearily I counted o'er and o'er  
The dingy splotches on the wall ;  
What touch of God is here to make me feel  
On hallowed ground my footsteps fall ?

Yet even there God had not left Himself  
Without a witness undefiled ;  
For in that bare unlovely tenement  
Did there not dwell a little child ?

Amid coarse sights and coarser sounds she grew  
Touched with a beauty of the skies ;  
As clean and bright as starry river buds  
From the black bottom-oozes rise.

Hidden, like the great Seer's spirits blest,  
In her own light from ill without,  
Her heart, a singing fountain of delight,  
All day her happy thoughts shook out.

Oft wild with glee she beat the dusty flags,  
Heard not the brawling voices chime,

Heard but the angels singing in her heart,  
And with her little feet kept time.

No toys had she, that child, no waxen babes  
To cuddle to her infant breast ;  
A child, yet thrilling to a woman's bliss,  
Both babe, and baby-mother blest.

And yet she nothing lacked, nay, for the Lord  
Was shepherd to His lamb ; for her  
His living waters gushed in stifling streets,  
And ever springing pastures were.

For to her love all things seemed beautiful,  
And those foul splotches on the wall  
A band of rosy scholars oft she made,  
Each blotch on her sweet heart a call.

And with her small pink finger-tip held up  
She'd sit before them smiling gay,  
And cry, ' Now, pretty dears, be good, be good,  
And all your little lessons say.'

Ah, light of God that shineth everywhere !  
If ere man all unlovely seems,  
A broken thing from which Thy life has run,  
And left but dust and dusty dreams ;

I ask no richer gift than that child's heart,  
To which all in Thy light appears ;  
And even the rude splotches on the wall,  
Bathed in its love grow ' pretty dears.'

Blind me with seeing tears, until I see  
In meanest things Thy beauty lies ;  
And God's great poetry is everywhere,  
To open hearts and love-lit eyes.

## THE HIDDEN ONES.

FAIR souls there are that in dark alleys hide,  
In anguish and forsakenness abide,  
    Reft of all good, and fed on tears, with pain,  
Lord of the house, who yet like stars alway  
Do walk the darkness in eternal day.

Their words ring out upon the listening ear,  
Like some sweet Angelus we haply hear,  
    Borne upwards from dim valleys drenched in storm,  
Telling us, as we climb the mountain stair,  
That the dear God is keeping watch down there.

For in their hearts blooms Faith, the mystic birth,  
That rooted grows from darkest things of earth,  
    Like that strange sea-rose nursed on bitter dews,  
Unsunned, and beaten by tempestuous swells,  
That blossoms in the lonely heart of shells.

τὸ φανερούμενον φῶς.

A METEOR, flaming on its way,  
Struck the dark world with sudden day,  
While all men slept, then passed away.

A lover woke, and murmuring cried :  
‘The day ! that brings her to my side,  
Brings to mine arms her maiden pride.’

A midnight wrestler paused in prayer :  
‘’Tis He ! the day of wrath is here !  
Wake ye that sleep, repent and fear !’

A sick girl turned her sleepless eye :  
‘Are flights of angels passing by,  
So great a light is in the sky?’

A rich man started from his bed :

‘ A fire ! my wealth consumes ! ’ he said,

‘ My garnered fields to heaven flame red. ’

A little child its arms outswept,

With upturned face, and ‘ Mammy ’ wept,

Then turned upon its side and slept.



## DAISIES.

My dreaming eyes were set in some deep trance  
Of Love and Pain, when in her own great light  
The soul is shut in on herself, with glance  
That, seeing, sees not fairest outward sight,  
Ear that unhearing hears ;

When in the mystic house some smooth-hinged door  
Swung wide, and all your innocent white throng  
Came crowding in upon the sense, and o'er  
Me swept in vision beautiful and strong,  
And blessed me unawares.

Ye stood white-wingèd each as stars at dawn,  
Like shining hosts of young-eyed cherubim,  
In breathless adoration sunward drawn,  
Your faces turning all one way to Him,  
Who makes your endless day.

Each star seemed ready for a heavenward flight,  
But as fond mothers bid their darlings go,  
Yet lest they go too far still clasp them tight,  
One little stem still held you fast below,  
Lest ye should soar away ;

Lest ye should own the kinship of your birth,  
And join your starry sisters of the skies,  
And leave all desolate our starless earth,  
That never more should see your opening eyes  
Among her orphan dew.

So meek your one green tie to us ye own,  
Keeping your glad epiphanies in the dust,  
And from our cradle to our grave unknown,  
Dear new nativities of love and trust  
Into our hearts infuse.

Star of our childhood pure, ere yet we had  
Outgrown the lily, all our thoughts as white  
As when your round and happy faces bade  
'Good morning' to us, brothers in delight,  
From morn till shut of day.

And with your heavenly treasure rust nor thief  
Corrupts we filled our dimpled hands with glee,  
And one dew fell upon our sleep at eve,  
And one rose-flush of slumbering infancy  
Upon our faces lay.

And yours the first light chains of earth we wore,  
Fair flowery chains of our lost paradise,  
Who since have known such heavy chains and sore  
Of sin and death and dire necessities,  
Iron whose rust is blood.

Yet those first chains perchance a promise were,  
Forecasting for us a necessity,  
That still is perfect freedom, ordered fair—  
Love's golden chain that whoso wears is free,  
Self-motioned unto good.

Up with the day our paths of toil ye grace ;  
Still turning to the light, your honest eye  
Bids us be plain and high as Truth's own face,  
And with white deeds and sunbright chastity  
Our golden manhood crown.

And all the footprints of our joy ye set  
In orient pearls, and on our griefs ye shine  
A star of hope upon our eyelids wet,  
Just touched with some new rose of dawn divine,  
New life will make our own.

And when old age has bowed us and we look  
Up to the stars no more, but track the dust,  
Still ye forsake us not ; by field and brook  
Our childhood's star shines back old love and trust,  
And light our worn feet home.

Nor even then when the last prayer is said,  
And the last lingering footstep dies away,  
Do ye forsake the place where Love is laid,  
But o'er his grave keep humble watch each day,  
Till the great dawning come.

Angel or flower shall I call you, sweets ?  
Who share the long lone watchings of the heart,  
Trimming your deathless lamps in winter sleets  
And summer suns with the wise virgins' art,  
To keep Love's vigils there.

Till looking back from other worlds of light,  
Our earth may show, like you, a mild white star,  
And night and death, and tempest in the night,  
Be seen a wandering spot rose-fringed afar,  
With morn and evening fair.

# A FLOOD IN SPRING.

ALL night the roaring dark fell loud  
 About the streaming storm-lashed eaves ;  
 All night the darkened panes were swashed  
 With dripping sprays of ivy-leaves.

All night upon the rocking bough  
 The bird sat close to the wet nest ;  
 Nor felt the windy grey drenched dawn  
 Thrill into song within her breast.

All night the voiceless meadow brooks,  
 The silver secrets of the mead,  
 Guessed at but by the crowding flowers,  
 Rose in their plashy beds of reed.

Till on that glittering morn of May  
 We rose up to the strangest sight—  
 The waters out from vale to vale,  
 May-meadows flooded in a night.

Beneath our loved old meadow trees  
The summer sky spread broad and bright ;  
The daisies drowned in morning blue,  
All went to heaven in the night.

And every bird that beats the air  
Had now a phantom brother dear,  
That flies with him through fairer skies,  
And sings a song no man can hear.

And silver footed clouds slow pace  
The path to church across the fields ;  
And everywhere the strong brown earth  
To visionary depths now yields.

And all our old familiar gates  
That let us through but yester morn  
To field-paths rambling through the dew,  
And glades all blanched with fragrant thorn ;

Now open but to ghostly hands  
On footless depths of rosy dawn,

And moist blue chasms of burning noon,  
And sunset hollows deep withdrawn.

And the great stars come down at night,  
And walk with men upon the earth,  
As when the sons of morning sang  
Of all fair things the primal birth.

Old Saturn with his belts of fire  
Majestic treads our pastures fair,  
And the sweet sister Pleiades  
Stream through the glen with golden hair.

And where we toiled now floats the cloud,  
And where we wept now burns the star ;  
And from our narrow vexed to-day  
Open calm infinities afar.

And all our common beaten paths  
Without a sound now break away,  
And show God's heaven of love beneath,  
And in our dust fresh springs of day.



## ON A DEAD ROBIN IN A CHURCH.

WHAT, dead, dear heart? thy throat, so dainty sweet,  
 Limp as Long Purples<sup>1</sup> of the meadow grass,  
 Laid low and fading where the mowers pass ;  
                                           Thy pretty feet  
 Curled up, their tender trefoils shut beneath  
                                           Chill dews of death.

Must never more against the wintry west  
 Thy thin sweet song be heard beside our door,  
 Piping of spring amid the branches hoar ?  
                                           Thy ruffled breast<sup>\*</sup>  
 Red as a russet beech-leaf in the sun,  
                                           When day is done.

<sup>1</sup> 'There with fantastic garlands did she come, of crow-  
 flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples' (*Hamlet*, Act III.,  
 Sc. VII.) The common meadow orchis.

Many rude storms thou knew'st, thou tender thing,  
Many a roaring dark about thy bed,  
No stouter roof above thy harmless head  
Than thine own wing,  
And God's great care for thee His little one,  
Who faileth none.

Yet here within this cool and silent place  
Thou need'st must find thy death where souls find  
life,  
And windless calms amid the tempests strife,  
And heaven's own grace.  
Our tenderest balms but bruise thy harmless head,  
And leave thee dead.

How was it, Dear? These jewelled panes o'erhead  
Didst take for the rich summer dawns divine,  
That filled those dark leaf lattices of thine  
With trembling red ;  
And flying upwards those strange splendours dread  
Did strike thee dead?

Or seemed these quaint carved figures, lying prone,  
Thine own dear babes grown old, and dead to  
fame,  
Grown old waiting a love that never came,  
And turned to stone?  
Freezing thy life-blood in thy balmy breast  
With their cold rest.

Or didst thou recognise again the Woe,  
That erst thy pious breast did ruddy stain,  
And fling thyself against the pictured pane  
In vain, nor know  
But blessed beams now pierce those hands and side  
With ruby dyed?

Or broke thy heart alone for thy loved haunts,  
Thy daisies that one touch of crimson makes  
Akin with thee, thy meads, thy bosky brakes,  
And woodland chaunts?  
All thy wide life of pastures, wood, and rosy sky,  
Left, here to die.

Couldst thou not stay and let us sing together ?

Thy world, that like a raindrop on a thorn

No shadow casts, and our great world forlorn,

That casteth ever

The shadow, Death, and in heaven's topmost height

Behold, 'tis night.

Or did the golden throats that throb in thunder

With man's great adoration and his pain,

O'erpower thine, shatter thy simple strain,

And break asunder

Thy glad child-hymns, and daisy-linkèd days,

With vaster praise ?

I know not ; only that thy life was caught

Within a vaster life that shut thee in

With thunders and with lightnings, death and sin ;

And thou distraught

Didst dash thyself against that alien light,

And die that night.

## IN AMONG THE WHEAT.

In among the wheat, in among the wheat,  
She and I wandered one eve in the sun ;  
Blue-dim in the gold the pathway did run  
Through cornfield and farm ;  
Splendours streamed up from the earth at our feet,  
Wind-shaken flames of amber-stemmed wheat,  
Splendours streamed down from the west golden-  
warm,  
Earth and sky met in one deep tender glow ;  
With them it was evening, rich and complete,  
With us 'twas chill dawn, as we wandered on slow  
In among the wheat.

In among the wheat, in among the wheat,  
The path was so narrow that ran through the dew,  
No room as we went was there ever for two,  
So I led the way ;

Whispers i' the wheat, and whispers i' the heart,  
As silently loving we walked on apart ;

‘Loves she me? hates she me? will she say nay?’  
‘Hush my heart ! hush my heart ! hush though thou  
break.’

The corn-daisies winked golden-eyed at our feet,  
‘Fool that he is, not to trust us and speak,  
In among the wheat.’

In among the wheat, in among the wheat,  
Hearing her, feeling her garments' soft play,  
I walked on by heart, not by sight, all the way,

For with her was my sense ;  
Till we reached where a stile makes a flowery bay,  
’Twixt two golden tides that soft up to it sway—

Coming up through the wheat, then I watched  
her from thence,

Slipping her low golden cloud like a star,

And flushing, all rosy, right up to my feet,  
Then waiting my help to climb the stile's bar,  
In among the wheat.

In among the wheat, in among the wheat,  
Up in my arms I took her, and laid  
The whole of my life on her lips' budded red,  
In one exquisite kiss.

Deep golden laughter took hold of the wheat,  
That rippled and rippled, and broke at our feet ;  
The corn-daisies stared, wide-eyed, at our bliss,  
And high up by himself in the roseate glow  
The lark wild for joy sang sweet, sweet, sweet,  
Of ineffable things going on down below  
In among the wheat.

In among the wheat, in among the wheat ;  
Gone was the stile, left behind, and passed by,  
But the kiss still remained, as my love and I  
Went soft on our way.  
Golden was the west, and golden the corn,  
And golden, O golden our love's opening morn,  
Where our two hearts in shining made but one day ;  
And though narrow the path that ran through the dew,  
So close now we walked, so close and so sweet,  
That somehow we found room enough for us two  
In among the wheat.

## THE FIELD FLOWER.

LEMOINE.

A SUNBROWN maid, a wild field flower,  
Once loved a wealthy yeoman's son ;  
The poor haymaker had no dower,  
But the rich heart her lover won.  
And as she wept the father spake  
One day, ' Come, mow this field of mine ;  
If in three days is won the stake,  
Then in three days my son is thine.'

A sweet and tender tale I sing,  
Of love and grief a simple lay,  
A touching half-forgotten thing  
The mowers tell among the hay.



The fond maid listened, and half thought  
Of love and joy to die outright ;  
And in her hand her scythe she caught,  
And sore she laboured day and night ;  
Fainting and well nigh in despair,  
Fresh power she sought from heaven above,  
Her love new strength still won from prayer,  
And all her simple prayer was love.

A sweet and tender tale I sing,  
Of love and grief a simple lay,  
A touching half-forgotten thing  
The mowers tell among the hay.

Once as she toiled, her yearning eye  
Fell on a little daisy near :  
'Poor simple flower, must thou too die,  
For my true heart to win my Dear ?'  
But as beneath her scythe it fell,  
Its eye had such a pleading power,  
Her breast must needs with pity swell—  
Was she not too a poor field flower ?

A sweet and touching tale I sing,  
Of love and grief a simple lay,  
A touching half-forgotten thing  
The mowers tell among the hay.

The third day duly to the vale  
Again the wealthy yeoman came ;  
Breathless she was and deathly pale,  
But her young eyes with rapture flame.  
'My girl, I did but jest,' he said,  
'Here, these ten crowns your toil will pay.'  
And by her scythe that eve lay dead  
One flower the more among the hay.

Such is the sweet and touching tale  
The mowers tell among the hay ;  
And every maid within the vale  
Weeps as she sings that simple lay.

## THE FOLDED LEAF.

'Love from his treasure bringeth forth things new and old.'

*From the Persian.*

It was a quiet place of leaves that took  
Religious meanings from her still-lit face,  
And set her beauty in a tender grace,  
And voiceless sanctities about her shook.

Outstretched we lay and read in summer calm,  
Her cheek's most perfect curve, more smoothly pale  
Than nested throistles' eggs within the vale,  
Cupped in the hollow of her rosy palm.

And from the passionate sad lay we read,  
A light struck up from love's fair rhythmic flow,  
That played about her lips, and touched her brow,  
Like dancing light from water upward shed.

Breathless we read, till on two leaves we came

Close shut as wings of poisèd butterflies,

Hoarding their sun-loved jewels from all eyes,  
Where Love in fire hath writ his secret name ;

Then all her brows' fair smoothness fretted grew,

With little eager airs of baffled thought,

And as to loose the page she something sought,  
The silver dagger from her hair she drew.

When lo, her swathèd wealth of tresses rare

About the page came tumbling all unwrought ;

And all the glory of the poet's thought  
Was blurred with golden glories of her hair.

But as she turned her face with queenly air,

To wreathe the fragrant cloud about her head,

I leant across the passion of the Dead,  
And trembling kissed the perfect lips laid bare.

And so between the folded leaves, ah bliss !

We found four sweeter leaves that closer clung,  
And parting, all that hopeless passion sung  
Had found its consummation in a kiss.

Again they watch it wild with fear,  
Wild with sweet hopes and anguish dear  
The storm is in its boughs again,  
Its apple blossom weeps with rain.

Again the sudden sun breaks out,  
The glad birds sing, the cuckoos shout,  
And winds that breathe their fond desires  
Do shake the rain-drops' hidden fires.

But as red-lipped the ripe fruit grows,  
And each in happy stealth arose,  
To pluck its wealth beneath the sun—  
Love laughing tossed their worlds in one,

And Sleep soft slipped her veil away,  
When lo, sweet mouth to mouth they lay ;  
And in the glimmering orchard near,  
The earliest bird sang loud and clear.

## THE THUNDER SHOWER.

Up from the south a great cloud drew,  
Trailing her dusky purples came  
O'er the burning west, and sun-blanch'd blue ;  
And her shadowy fingers deadening laid  
On the throbbing chords of light that rayed  
The deep horizons faint with flame.

O air-born daughter of the south,  
O nursing mother of May flowers,  
Bending to every thirsty mouth,  
That drinks thy sweetness in secret bowers,  
And wet-lipped sleeps to the hushing sound  
Of thine infinite whispers of love around ;  
Thou comest to us from over the sea,  
Where my sailor boy is thinking of me ;  
What dost thou bring from over the sea ?

An orient pearl for every flower,  
And loosening silver for the leaves ;  
Cool whispers rippling round the eaves,  
And soft sweet pipings by the hour,  
Of chilly birds in dim wet lanes,  
And glades all haunted with grey rains,  
And footfalls of the falling shower ;  
And mellow thunders far away  
From purple hollows dim with heat.  
And for the dusty browning street  
A smell of rain, with patches grey  
Beneath the pelted chestnut bloom,  
Where children gather from their play,  
And passers-by a moment stay  
To drink in all the cool perfume ;  
For my loved one's grave a greening shower,  
For my little sick child a cool soft sleep ;  
And for these eyes that could not weep,  
Heavy and dull as the passing hour,  
Waters divine that weep away  
The aching sweetness of a day,  
That has passed for ever and ever away.

## ME IN THEE.

FROM THE PERSIAN.

ONE unto his Belovèd came,  
And knocked and called upon her name ;  
And from within a voice, full-sweet,  
That made his heart to music beat,  
Cried, ' Who is there ? '  
And low he made reply,  
' Love, it is I '  
But the voice spake in chill despair,  
' No room within this narrow hut  
For thee and me.'  
And lo, immutably  
The door was shut.

Then that sad lover fled away,  
And wept and fasted night and day



In desert places, making prayer,  
Nor saw the kindly face of men.  
And after many days again  
To the Belovèd's door he came,  
And knocked and called upon her name ;  
And from within a voice thereto  
Cried, ' Who is there ? '  
And he, whom love had taught, replied,  
' It is thyself ' And lo,  
The door was opened wide.

## THE LOVER'S MAY-DAY SONG.

Now breaks the day, and with bright hand  
Unseals the cisterns of the dawn,  
And floods with light the dusky lawn,  
And all the glimmering land ;  
And breaks my heart for thee  
Ah, bid it break,  
For thy dear sake,  
Break into light and ecstasy.

Now breaks sun-warmed the barren bough—  
A wintry rod that graceless grew  
Unblessed by heaven's own sun and dew—  
Breaks into blossom now,  
And breaks my heart for thee.  
Ah, bid it break,  
For mine own sake,  
Break into flower and fruit to be.

134 THE LOVER'S MAY-DAY SONG.

Now breaks the silence into song,  
Spring's wingèd angel now is here,  
And raptures ring out far and near,  
Flouting sad winter's wrong ;  
And breaks my heart for thee.  
Ah, bid it break,  
For love's own sake,  
Break into vows 'twixt thee and me.

## THE MAIDEN'S SONG.

THROUGH THE MEADOWS TO THE SEA.

SIGHING, sighing,

Ah, sweet south !

But sweeter far the balmy kisses  
Of his mouth.

Flying, flying,

Ah, blithe bee !

But my heart tastes a honey never  
Known to thee.

Singing, singing,

Ah, dear bird !

But deeper by his lightest whisper  
I am stirred.

## THE MAIDEN'S SONG.

Swaying, swinging,

Ah, frail flower !

But more my heart sways to his wishes

Every hour.

Crying, crying,

Ah, sea-mew !

Mine is a rest thou vainly seekest,

Storm-proof, true.

Sighing, sighing,

Ah, sad sea !

Hadst thou a heart to love, for thee, too,

Rest would be.

‘GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD DAY.’

WHEN Love's white star had dipt amid  
Dark honeysuckles in the lane ;  
And in the charmed dark, close hid,  
The nightingale poured forth her pain ;  
When winking marigolds had shut  
Their golden fringes to the light—  
Heaven's starry world on world o'erhead,  
Love's world on world within outspread—  
Her hand in his she shyly put,  
And in the porch they said ‘Good night.’

And when with meeting steps they bruised  
The earliest dews beneath their feet,  
And love's delicious shame confused  
Their gaze with consciousness too sweet,

That hid in feigned indifference,  
Yet dashed her cheek with rosy day,  
While all his thoughts stood up to sing  
His praise who made so sweet a thing ;  
Then thrilled through every happy sense,  
He touched her hand and said ' Good day.'

But now so deep, so windless deep,  
Has sunk the sea of their content,  
It hath no shore to break its sleep,  
Or loose it into ravishment ;  
No silver reach of morning grey,  
No golden edge of fading light ;  
But hushed their heart as brooding bird,  
Their lips by no good wishes stirred ;  
For by his side 'tis all ' good day,'  
And in his arms 'tis still ' good night.'

## THE BURIED THORN.

Love, when thou art not kind,  
A leafless May bush then I grow,  
Hung with cold fog-drops ; every wind  
Shrills thro' me, sifting up the snow,  
And chatter all my branches bare.

My singing birds are fled,  
The frozen nest itself is dead,

My leaf is shed,  
And all my flowery eyes struck blind.  
The thorn, the thorn alone is there,  
Love, when thou art not kind.

Love, when thou art but kind,  
The selfsame bush in spring I grow ;  
My young leaves babble to the wind,  
Into warm blossom bursts the snow,  
And budded pearls do stud my bower.



And from my greening heart,  
No more the songs of spring depart,  
While swift wings dart  
Sweet food for new-fledged hopes to find ;  
And ah ! the thorn is lost in flower,  
Love, when thou art but kind.

## HÆMONY.

Among the rest a small unsightly root,  
 But of divine effect, he culled me out ;  
 The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,  
 But in another country, as he said,  
 Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil ; . . .  
 He called it Hæmony.—MILTON.

A LITTLE dust the summer breeze  
 Had sifted up within a cleft,  
 A slanted raindrop from the trees,  
 A tiny seed by chance airs left—  
 It was enough ; the seedling grew,  
 And from the barren rock-heart drew  
 Her dimpled leaf and tender bud,  
 And dews that did the bare rock stud ;  
 And crowned at length her simple head  
 With utter sweetness, breathed afar,

And burning like a dusky star—  
Sweetness upon so little fed,  
Ah me ! ah me !  
And yet hearts go uncomforted.

For hearts, dear Love, such seedlings are,  
That need so little, ah, so less  
Than little on this earth, to bear  
The sun-sweet blossom, happiness ;  
And sing—those dying hearts that come  
To go—their swan-song flying home.  
A touch, a tender tone—no more—  
A face that lingers by the door  
To turn and smile, a fond word said,  
A kiss—these things make heaven ; and yet  
We do neglect, refuse, forget,  
To give that little, ere 'tis fled,  
Ah me ! ah me !  
And sad hearts go uncomforted.

I asked of thee but little, nay,  
Not for the golden fruit thy bough

Ripens for thee and thine who day  
    By day beneath thy shadow grow ;  
Only for what, from that full store,  
Had made me rich, nor left thee poor,  
A drift of blossom, needed not  
For fruit, yet blessing some dim spot.  
    A touch, a tender word soon said,  
Fond tones that seem our Dead again  
Come back after long years of pain,  
    Lonely, for these my sick heart bled—  
        Ah me ! ah me !  
Sad hearts that go uncomforted.

## LADY, WHY ART THOU SAD?

VICTOR HUGO.

LADY, why art thou sad amid delight,  
Why dost thou weep forlorn?  
Lovely of soul but mournful as the night,  
Thou, fair as summer morn.

What recks it that this fickle life unjust  
To man and maid below,  
Beneath thy feet still crumbles into dust?  
Thy deathless spirit know!

Thy soul that soon perchance will take her flight  
To some pure clime afar,  
And bear thee far above our dolorous night,  
Beyond our fret and jar.

LADY, WHY ART THOU SAD? 145

Be like the bird that rests one moment long  
On boughs too weak to bear,  
Feels the branch bend, nor stays her happy song,  
Conscious her wings are there.

'Je mourrai seul.'—*Pascal*.

THE silent chariot standeth at the door,  
The house is hushed and still from roof to floor,  
None heard the sound of its mysterious wheels,  
Yet each its presence feels.

No champing bit, nor tramp of pawing feet,  
All dark and silent up and down the street,  
And yet thou may'st not keep it waiting there  
For one last kiss or prayer.

Thy words, with some strange Other interchanged,  
Strike cold across us like loved eyes estranged,  
With things that are not fraught ; our things that are  
Fade like a sun-struck star.

And thou too weak and agonised to lift  
The cup to quench thy dying thirst, or shift

Thy pillow, now without our help must rise,  
Nor wait our ministries.

Thou, loved and cherished, must go forth alone,  
None sees thee fondly to the door, not one ;  
No head is turned to see thee go ; we stay  
Where thou art not, and pray.

No panel bars thy white resistless feet,  
Our walls are mist to thee ; out in the street  
It waits, It waits for thee, for thee alone :  
‘ Arise, let us begone.’

Alone, alone upon thine awful way !  
Do any show thee kindness ? Any stay  
Thy heart ? Or does the silent charioteer  
Whisper ‘ Be of good cheer ’ ?

We know not. None may follow thee afar,  
None hear the sound of thy departing car.  
Only vast silence like a strong black sea  
Rolls in ’twixt us and thee.



## THE TWO WORLDS.

Two mighty silences, two worlds unseen  
Over against each other lie ;  
For ever boundlessly apart have been,  
For ever nigh.

In one is God Himself, and angels bright  
Do congregate, and spirits fair ;  
And, lost to sight in depths of mystic light,  
Our Dead dwell there.

All things that cannot fade, nor fall, nor die,  
Voices beloved and precious things foregone,  
Float up and up, and in that silence high  
With God grow one.

No barren silence, nay, but such as over  
Lips that we love its spell may fling,

Where tender words like nested swallows hover,  
Ere they take wing.

Sometimes from that far land there comes a breeze,  
Soft airs surprise us on our way,  
A dew drops from above ; then on our knees  
We fall and pray.

And oft in some low crimson coast of cloud  
We deem we see its far-off strand ;  
Our hearts like shipwrecked sailors cry aloud,  
'The land ! The land !'

And side by side that other world unknown,  
Drenched in unbroken silence lies—  
World of ourselves, where each one lives alone,  
And lonely dies.

With our unuttered griefs, our joys untold,  
Our multitudinous thoughts' swift throng  
We dwell ; one silence them and us doth fold  
All our life long.

Out from those depths there comes a cry of pain,

‘ Ah, pitifully, Lord,’ it calls,

‘ Behold the sorrows of our hearts !’ and then—

A silence falls.

Die down, die down, O thou tormented sea !

Suffer my silent world to fill

With voices from that land which call to me,

‘ We love thee still.’

In vain—I hear them not ; but o’er my loss

Comes an apocalyptic voice :

‘ There shall be no more sea, and thou canst cross.’

Rejoice ! Rejoice !

## COR CORDIUM.

SWEET soul, the world is loud against thy name,  
In righteous wrath men shut thee from their doors,  
And women's kindly looks, deep-fraught with blame,  
Fold up their tender hues like chilly flowers  
Before the storm, whene'er thy name is heard,  
Nor yield thee charity of smile nor word.

But I ne'er think of thee, nor pray, nor dream,  
But in these eyes, that sadly scanned thy face,  
Waters divine well up from some far stream  
That hath its rise in some dear land of grace  
Far hence, where Love and Pity, tenderer grown,  
Have wept and kissed their sweet selves into one.

For still I feel thee pure, though wild thy word,  
And marred thy thought, and all unsweet thy creed ;  
And like a wayside Christ thou standest, blurred,  
Disfeatured, blank with storm and wind and weed,  
The dear divinity of look all fled,  
But still the tender pleading arms outspread.

Thou wert to me like some fine instrument  
Of music wrought from a fair forest tree,  
That choral grew to morning winds, and lent  
A leafy tongue to all soft airs that be ;  
Or dimly massed against the evening sky,  
Breathless in moon-enchanted dreams did lie.

For thou wert one with Nature ; unto thee  
Her thought grew vocal to the sense within  
That penetrates her voiceless mystery ;  
And thine were incantations strong to win  
Fair harmony from mute indifferent things,  
And wake the hidden life that soars and sings.

But when the world's great wrong, its curse and pain,  
    Clutched at thy trembling chords, thy spirit pure,  
Attuned to winds, still lights, and falling rain,  
    Finding no resolution sweet, no sure  
Accord, no voice of hope, no upward glow,  
    Broke with that incommunicable woe.

And now thine ancient melodies are fled ;  
    The young dewes weep but o'er fair woman lost,  
The lark is cruel, a careless god o'erhead  
    That sings his fill when hearts are breaking most ;  
The lily wears her festive white forlorn,  
    The rose's odorous breath is all forsworn.

No truth, no faith, no purity of will  
    Thou seest anywhere, 'tis discord all ;  
And evermore thou hear'st the underswell  
    Of human sin, and woe, and passion's thrall ;  
Thy old sweet uses homeless sob in pain  
    About thy riven chords in vain, in vain !

O unstrung Heart and Will ! the dolorous blast  
That passing broke thy music into pain,  
Pours through the mighty organ-pipes at last,  
And all the loveless roar that vexed thy brain  
Storms into music jubilant and calm,  
And thunders through the worlds a victor's psalm.

## THE MYSTERY OF PAIN.

'Tis but a little boon, O friends ! I crave,  
Will He not, think you, hear my heart's last cry ?  
The thunder of His power is shown to save,  
Will He not surely grant it ere I die ?'

With pitying hands we smoothed the tortured brow,  
Turned not from those sad pleading eyes away ;  
For him we would have laid the dear life low,  
And measuring love by love, we answered 'Yea.'

He lay there in his strength, no more to rise,  
Like some great bough, rent by a sudden gust,  
Full-blossomed, all its leafy melodies,  
And singing birds laid silent in the dust.

And yet not so ; earth on her painless brow  
Ne'er wore that agony of human thought,



That of before and after makes its woe,  
By memory filled, from saddening forethought caught.

Earth's tender things came to him dying there ;  
The vast and pitying air of heaven blew in,  
Parting with dewy touch the fevered hair ;  
The cuckoo's note from distant groves came thin ;

The morn's first tender chirpings round the eaves  
Told him the night was gone, her phantoms laid ;  
The showery shiver of cool aspen leaves  
Lulled him, but could not grant him what he prayed.

And still with that pathetic voice that took  
Lorn echoes from the subterranean caves  
Of human pain, he asked, with wistful look,  
'Will He not grant me what my spirit craves?'

Could we then say him nay, or meet in vain  
Those dark eyes' pleading power—sad eyes where lay  
Death's shadow heavy as a sleep—nor feign  
The soothing smile, and answer 'Surely yea?'

And yet he died without it, lingering,  
With that sad asking cadence in his tone,  
Like that unfinished note with which, in spring,  
The shy wood-pigeon mourns in woodlands lone.

What was it then on which his heart was set ?  
A little space free from pain's maddening power,  
One little hour for love and prayer ; and yet  
He died in agony, nor saw that hour.

O Love ! we cannot understand nor hear  
The voice thou speakest in—we know not whence ;  
Its octave is too vast for human ear,  
And sounds blank silence to the listening sense.

Thou hast eternity to love in, Thee  
Time urges not ; in thine eternal years  
Thy large plan ripens to a whole, while we  
Must love in haste betwixt life's smiles and tears.

Thou Who didst know all storms that waste the heart,  
Thou Who didst drain our woe, nor taste our balm ;

Thou saw'st the whole, where we but see the part—  
Doubting we turn to Thee, and Thou art calm.

All cries of pain, all precious hopes foregone,  
All mysteries of regent ill, all balm  
Asked but denied, solution vast, unknown,  
Find in that even brow's triumphant calm.

And as a child who fears some stranger's gaze,  
Wraps itself, clinging to its mother's side,  
Within her robe, nor sees its mother's face,  
But knows her near, and so is satisfied;

So from our life's dread mystery, O Lord,  
Within thy bounteous vesture's hem we hide ;  
And brave all sights of ill, and wait thy word,  
When knowing all we shall be satisfied.

## A DIRGE.

SLEEP, sweetheart, sleep !  
Fold the green about thee close ;  
Shrillest cry that ever rose,  
Wail of world-old wrongs and woes  
Railings of thy bitter foes,  
Shatter not thy deep repose.

Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !

Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !  
Thou didst sink in thickest night,  
Thou to all in gloom a light,  
Thou whose passion was the right,  
Thou a wonder and delight,  
Sank without a star in sight.

Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !

Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !  
Lift thy darkened eyes, behold,  
Winking lights of spring unfold,  
Starry watch about thee hold,  
Daisies pied and crocus gold,  
Flame the myriad blades untold.  
Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !

Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !  
Wring thy tender hands no more,  
Hands thy loved ones once forswore,  
Deemed them foul and stained with gore,  
Since old lies to earth they tore,  
Hands that every burthen bore.  
Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !

Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !  
We were cruel, pierced thee, smote ;  
Now but tender wing'd things float  
In the low sun, mote on mote,  
Shrill to thee their humble note ;  
Honey-bees upon thee doat,

Sea-sighs come to thee afloat.

Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !

Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !

Nay, what ailed thee still to groan,

Feel the world's wrong as thine own ?

Couldst thou not dance to woman's moan,

Eat and drink and pipe it down,

Wiser with the wise world grown ?

Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !

Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !

Thou didst dash thyself in vain

'Gainst old wrongs, nor shook their reign ;

Couldst not lift the weight of pain

Off man's heart that writhes again,

Wert but crushed thyself and slain.

Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !

Sleep, sweetheart, sleep

Nature guards thy sacred grief,

Night-winds sigh it in the leaf,

Throstles give it sweet relief,  
Billows in a foamy sheaf  
Thunder it against the reef.  
Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !

Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !  
From thy grave a blade we take,  
In thy heart's blood dip and slake,  
Thus a sword of God we make,  
Stoutest wrongs can never break :  
Steel grow grass blades for thy sake.  
Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !

Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !  
In thy failure strong we grow ;  
Flung in passion on the foe,  
Count we not the serried row ;  
For the Dead baptised now,  
Dare to fail, and conquer so.  
Sleep, sweetheart, sleep !

## THE SWORD OF GOD.

AN angel went forth with the kingdoms of darkness  
to war.

Not from the Infinite came he, not from afar,  
For the immutable world, the eternal is here.  
Earth and the sea, and the stars, and the voices I  
hear,

Are but its glory as veiled to the sense and the sight,  
Shapings and shadowings of the ineffable light ;  
The infinite Word of God that filleth all space  
Broken on infant lips into tenderest grace.

He came not, he was, slowly gathering out of the light  
Into majestic shape on my awe-stricken sight,  
As a thunder-cloud gathers in August, we know not  
from whence,  
Out of the paling blue of the heat, on the sense ;



And the sweep of his purple is heard in the sultry  
leaves,

And the hot parch'd earth at his coming a long sigh  
heaves—

Merciful and mighty, so he arose on the world,  
Seeking a weapon to fight hell's forces uphurled.

O earth ! earth ! earth ! what sword wilt thou give to  
his ire,

Welded and wrought of the fierceness of terrible fire,  
Baptised in keen ice that splits the granite in twain,  
Whose lightnings flicker swift death on the fierce  
battle plain,

To utter the might of his arm laid bare against wrong?  
What earthly weapon of temper so keen and so  
strong

As to hold the rush of his soul in battle, what sword  
The rapture of anger angelic, the wrath of the Lord?

When lo, he paused by my garden—a slow, deep  
smile

Made an awful light about his mute lips the while,

As he gathered a tall white lily that trembled and  
bowed ;

And pity fainted within me, crying aloud :

‘Not that, oh my lord, not that ! such a tender thing,  
Made but for cool soft touches of dew at day spring,  
Made to dream out its days in festival white and  
gold,

To gossip with bees and all love’s sweetness unfold.’

But he passed, nor heard my pitiful human wail,  
And his face was set to the battle wrathfully pale ;  
Behind him his vesture streamed out from his dread  
glancing form,

As streams the long foam from the back of the billow  
in storm,

One arm held before him to scatter the smoke of his  
foes,

The stench of man’s evil, the reek of his fathomless  
woes ;

With the other outstretched he smote to the left and  
the right,

With the lily he bore in his hand, the sword of his might.

And wherever the lily fell the darkness was scattered,  
And wherever the lily smote the evil was shattered ;  
Tyrannous force with the strength of the granite but

now

Crumbled to churchyard dust at a touch, scarce a  
blow,

Of that weakness divine, that whiteness caught from  
the dawn,

And dungeons of hate to their deep foundations yawn,  
And out of the stricken stones mild waters gush forth,  
Rivers of God that flow to the south from the north.

And still men cursed at the lily and hacked it and  
tore,

And some it smote on their knees to pray once more,  
And some smote down on their faces, biting the dust,  
And clamour and groans, brave love and bloodiest lust ;  
Till a sudden song like a burst of thrushes at dawn,  
Told the battle was won, the forces of evil withdrawn ;  
And I knew that one more deliverance was wrought  
on the earth,

‘ Glory to God ’ men sang in jubilant mirth.

But the lily, my lily that showed so gracious that  
morn ;

Ah me, all battered and wrung and faded and torn,  
Never again to walk in innocent white,  
Her virginal snows all smirched with the reek of the  
fight ;

The sweat of man's anguish where once lay the dew  
and the rain,

Her golden heart bruised and torn with utterest pain.  
And I wept for my lily ; and still, as I wept on apart,  
I seemed to be weeping and weeping a woman's heart.

## A VISION OF WOMANHOOD.

OUT in the desert, half-submerged, a sphinx  
Gazed at her awful mirrored loveliness,  
In dull deep waters sunk of Lethe, fed  
By the dark river of the unknown source ;  
Gazed at the pure high face that answered hers,  
As moon to moon, and lovely moulded curves  
Of motherhood that shaped the pure white breast,  
And deemed she saw herself, nor knew  
That just below the shining surfaces  
The woman sickened into unclean beast,  
Bestial, with ravening claws and murderous strength ;  
And all around were strewn the bones of men,  
And eyeless sockets filled with desert dust  
Of those who cursed her with a dying curse.

Then a great Angel, standing in the sun,  
Smote those dull Lethe-waters and they fled,  
And all her hidden shame to her lay bare ;  
And in her agony she knew herself  
To be half woman and half beast unclean,  
That grew to her and made one shuddering flesh  
With her, inextricably one with death.  
And all her being burned as in a furnace,  
And the cold stone was fused about her heart  
Into warm blood and sweat of agony ;  
While men awe-stricken gazed upon her woe,  
And every kingdom wailed because of her,  
And all the land was darkened for her sake.  
Then as one dead before her feet I fell,  
Made one with her intolerable shame.

Æons or hours did that deep trance endure ?  
When the dark veil of that abysmal sleep  
Was rent in twain by a loud trumpet sound,  
And starting up, I saw a temple vast,  
And many worshippers therein were bowed.  
But on the upturned faces, I beheld

The light of a new world, and homage high,  
As that a queen may render to her king,  
Who owning a subjection yet remains  
A majesty—such pure manhood on them lay.  
And high above all worshippers enthroned,  
Lo, the Egyptian woman who abode  
With Death in desert places ; and behold  
The beast was slain, the deathful riddle solved  
That slew the man ; and throned upon men's hearts—  
A wall of fire to guard her round about—  
A perfect woman in her weakness rose,  
And in her arms the future's child divine.

## THE WORLD'S OUTCASTS.

Down the world's great highway driven,  
Roof and wall and sun-sick street  
All aflame with dreadful faces,  
That upon Him glare and beat,  
And a roar of awful voices—  
Hissed and hooted, cursed and stoned,  
Lo, He passeth, He the outcast,  
Man-disowned.

Then a shout of coarse derision,  
And the seething, surging crowd  
Stop and thicken into silence,  
Round some central object bowed ;  
Where, beneath His shameful burthen  
And a woe too deep to trace,  
Dumbly He hath fallen forward  
On His face.



Who is poor enough and abject  
To help lift the shameful weight ?  
Who so lost and cursed already  
As to share His meed of hate ?  
Bear with Him a world's derision,  
He, the world's great castaway,  
Made supreme with Him in anguish  
Where He lay.

Only two in all the people—  
One a slave with bruised flesh ;  
And a lost girl from the country,  
Caught in pleasure's spangled mesh,  
Once all white with virginal blossom,  
Now befouled, cast off, decried—  
These they drave with cruel laughter  
To His side.

And on them they laid the burthen,  
But for such as these too vile,  
Heeding not his lash-torn shoulders  
As on him the load they pile ;

Heeding not the cruel bruising  
Of that girlish flesh of hers,  
As the vast procession slowly  
Onward stirs.

Ever down the world's great highways  
To the faithful tear-washed eye,  
Moves that sad and strange procession ;  
Ever on their way to die,  
Signing evil with their life-blood,  
Marking for the axe, the tree,  
With the Holy, the degraded,  
One in three.

Not in vain ye bear His burthen,  
Slaves, whose groaning no man hears,  
God's great image charred and blackened ;  
Lost ones, weeping bitter tears,  
By man's lust to shame devoted,  
Fouled your womanhood's sacred springs,  
He walks with you, He, the Outcast,  
King of kings.

God's elect to sore destruction,  
Cursed and smitten for man's sin !  
Through your bloody sweat and anguish  
Higher life for man ye win ;  
Yea, for very shame and pity  
He shall rise by your deep fall,  
Know by some remorseful passion  
Love is all.

## RUBÁIYÁT.

EVER from less to more the purpose runs,  
 That threads in one vast light a myriad suns,  
     A music in so vast an octave set  
 That oft its thunder into silence stuns.

The perfect circle of eternity  
 In time is but a crooked line to thee.  
     Wait, and the sun-bow's jewelled curve behold,  
 Wait, and Love's perfect orbit thou shalt see.

Deem not Love works in time ; his work is one ;  
 Beginning, end, exists in thee alone ;  
     But since his full-orb'd thought would strike thee  
     dead,  
 With burning ecstasies of light foredone,

For thee his glory into days he breaks,  
And days he crumbles into stars, and makes  
His light successive pass before thine eyes,  
His purpose broken small thy wonder wakes.

Love orders all ; with ordered steps and fair  
Each leaf climbs up its jewelled winding stair ;<sup>2</sup>  
The stars in golden rhythms rise and set,  
His words are music to the eye and ear.

But lest his harmonies too constant flow  
For the created sense to hear or know,  
He breaks them into discords, which in turn  
Beneath his hand to vaster music grow.

To speak, all things their opposites must meet,  
Honey must in the bitter find her sweet ;  
Silence forswear herself in sound, ere known,  
The light be slain of dark to grow complete.

And Love, to know himself as Love indeed,  
Must not his fulness wed with utter need ;  
The Life indeed still find himself in death,  
His deepest word be pain and things that bleed ?

<sup>2</sup> See Note.

The word must die, the deathless meaning lives,  
Silence enriched by all sad music gives,  
The life laid down retaken glorified,  
Love's mystic spiral that still upward strives.

For still in spirals vast move life and love,  
In lines upon themselves returning move,  
Evil that good defeats, but in its turn  
Made vaster good that higher climbs above.

Ever from less to more his purpose grows,  
Ever a life becoming, till the rose  
Of Love supreme, his thought's consummate flower,  
At length will crown the age's toil and woes ;

And show all things are made to play his part,  
Death gives his crown, the lightning's crooked dart  
He straightens to the sceptre of his power,  
Worlds rise and set to beatings of his Heart.

## LIFE'S COST.

I COULD not at the first be born  
But through another's bitter wailing pain ;  
Another's loss must be my sweetest gain,  
And love, only to win that I might be,  
    Must wet her couch forlorn  
With tears of blood and sweat of agony.

Since then I cannot live a week,  
But some fair thing must leave the daisied dells, ●  
The joy of pastures, bubbling springs and wells,  
And grassy murmurs of its peaceful days,  
    To bleed in pain, and reek,  
And die, for me to tread life's pleasant ways.

I cannot, sure, be warmed or lit,  
But men must crouch and toil in tortuous caves  
Bowed on themselves, while day and night in waves  
Of blackness wash away their sunless lives ;  
Or blasted and sore hit,  
Dark life to darker death the miner drives.

Naked, I cannot clothed be,  
But worms must patient weave their satin shroud,  
The sheep must shiver to the April cloud,  
Yielding his one white coat to keep me warm ;  
In shop and factory  
For me must weary toiling millions swarm.

With gems I deck not brow or hands,  
But through the roaring dark of cruel seas  
Some wretch, with shuddering breath and trembling  
knees,  
Goes headlong, while the sea-sharks dodge his quest ;  
Then at my door he stands,  
Naked, with bleeding ears and heaving chest.



I fall not on my knees and pray,  
But God must come from heaven to fetch that sigh,  
And piercèd Hands must bear it back on high ;  
And through His broken heart and cloven side  
    Love makes an open way  
For me, who could not live but that He died.

O awful sweetest life of mine,  
That God and man both serve in blood and tears !  
O prayers I breathe not but through other prayers !  
O breath of life, compact of others' sighs !  
    With this dread gift divine,  
Ah ! whither go, what worthily devise ?

If on myself I dare to spend  
This dreadful thing, in pleasure lapped and reared,  
What am I but a hideous idol smeared  
With human blood, that with its carven smile,  
    Alike to foe and friend,  
Maddens the wretch who perishes the while ?

I will away and find my God,  
And what I dare not keep, ask Him to take,  
And, taking, Love's sweet sacrifice to make.  
Then, like a wave, the sorrow and the pain  
    High heaven with glory flood ;  
For me, for them, for all, a splendid gain.

## THE SOUL'S MYSTERY.

I SAW a mighty Angel stand,  
Fronting the sun, upon the earth.  
Something he held within his hand,  
I knew not what ; when that dark unknown birth  
Into the fire remorselessly he cast ;  
And there went up the smoke  
Of its great torment through the land,  
Nor pity in the Angel woke.  
And unto him I cried aghast :  
‘ Ah, lord, what doest thou ? ’  
When lo ! from out the ashes of the brand  
A lily rose with golden heart aglow,  
Wet with cool dews, no smell of fire at all  
Upon her garments white and virginal.

But that dread Angel, pausing not,  
Thrust in his hand, and rudely tore  
The lily from its fragrant plot,  
And all disrooted flung it from the shore  
Into deep whelming waters for its shroud ;  
And as it sank there rose  
Infinite sobbings of the sea,  
And hollow sound of many woes.  
And unto him I cried aloud :

‘ Ah, lord, what doest thou ? ’  
When at his feet the waves washed up in glee  
A perfect pearl, that like a star did glow,  
The lily's whiteness hardened to a gem,  
Fit glory for a kingly diadem.

But he who knew no human ruth,  
Took that fair preciousness in trust,  
Then, wanton, with a stone's sharp tooth,  
Fretted and ground it into worthless dust ;  
And whirling dust grew all the stars on high,  
Dust for its sake the world,  
And empty dust the lifeless All

Through vacant spaces onward hurled.

And like a wail arose my cry :

‘ Ah, lord, what doest thou ? ’

When lo ! a perfect star, more virginal

Than that fair lily, with a brighter glow

Than sea-washed pearl, a splendour on its throne,

Eternal in the heavens above me shone.

And musing on the mystic whole,

I knew it for a human soul ;

Through love, through pain, through death at bitter  
strife,

The power attaining of an endless life.

## THE REVIVALISTS.

'WHAT think you of these preachers? Mountebanks  
Methinks, whose trick it is to draw the crowd ;  
With their fanatic talk of hell unfit  
For cultured men, their utterance uncouth,  
Their narrow creed, and broad vulgarity.  
'Tis but a passing stir, a blaze of straw,  
That scarce will leave an empty ash behind it.'

That night I had a vision in the dark.  
It was a picture wrought by some dead hand  
In days when men in such a glory walked,  
Their thoughts cast mighty shadows on the wall.  
Right in the centre, fronting, stood the Christ,  
In faded vesture clad, a toil-worn Man,  
With labour-hardened palms, not beautiful,  
But for the sad divinity of look,

And the divine compassions mutely rained  
From down-dropt eyes, and slow deep-smiling lips  
On one which was a sinner at His feet,  
Her arms flung out in infinite appeal  
From man that cursed, to God who does but bless  
One sad cheek pillowed softly on the foot  
That pausing waits, not to disturb her there.  
And by her kneels an older woman, one,  
Grown old in sin and sorrow not her own—  
Haply some loved one's—while one pendant hand  
Just sweeps the prostrate figure at her side,  
The other closely clasps the Christ's strong hand,  
Her eyes uplifted with that far-away  
Worshipping look of one who now has found  
A heart in which to lay her lost, a home  
To lay her anguish down. But on the right  
A little child has wrapped the Saviour's robe  
About itself, and from its hiding-place  
Peers out with bright uncomprehending eyes,  
While on the curly head His hand is laid.  
And further still, a working man with tools  
Upon his back, pausing, surveys the scene,

With pondering looks in meditation lost.  
But on the left full in the foreground stand  
Two Greeks, in robes of feasting, crowned with flowers,  
Fresh from some bright procession of the gods,  
Music and dance, and glorious poesy,  
A little drawn to one another stand,  
And, gazing half averted, criticise  
The scene—the sordid clothes, the womanhood  
That fouls the passing thought, the street display—  
With curling lip and air of fine disgust !

And, gazing on that masterpiece, I cried,  
‘ Let not fine culture, poesy, art, sweet tones,  
Build up about my soothèd sense a world  
That is not Thine, and wall me up in dreams ;  
So my sad heart may cease to pulse with Thine,  
The great World-Heart, whose blood, for ever shed  
Is human life, whose ache is man’s dumb pain.  
Let not my grasp on Life’s most awful Truth  
Be loosened ; but where’er the people hear,  
Quick-eared, as closer unto life, Thy step,  
And thronging bring their dumb hearts unto Thee,



To ease the ache that has no easeful words,  
There, through all rudest speech and gestures mean,  
Obscuring sights, and harsh fanatic sounds,  
Still may I see the Christ in faded vesture ;  
Nor stand with Greeks and coldly criticise  
The mean apparel, in whose tarnished hem,  
By a diviner instinct led, the lost,  
The sad, the poor, the sinful find sweet healing,  
But with that outcast woman in the dust,  
Heart of our hearts ! may worship and adore.

## LIFE'S ISSUES.

A CARELESS step and that was all.

Thy heedless foot

Passed on, no cloud did o'er thee fall,

And yet behind thee where it prest,

A broken blossom dying lay,

Crushed in the dust its silver crest.

And now no more, at dawn of day,

Its simple star in that low plot

Will rise, or rosy set at even ;

And earth has one more barren spot,

Touched with no starry thought of heaven,

For evermore a darkened joy,

A happiness thou didst destroy,

O heedless foot !

A careless moment, that was all.

Thine idle hand

On a fair thing of life did fall,

Then thou didst wander on at ease.

But it lay there and writhed in pain,

No more to mount upon the breeze

Nor poise in dewy shades again

A palpitating light of wings,

That now dust-dim can only creep ;

And hushed the tender murmurings

That sang the honeyed buds to sleep :

For evermore a darkened joy,

A happiness thou didst destroy,

O idle hand !

A careless mood, yes, that was all.

With heedless heart,

Thou didst pass on and hear no call,

And yet, close to thy careless talk,

A heart lay drowning in despair,

Waiting the word to rise and walk ;

A heart to whom one word or prayer

Of thine, had been the touch of Christ,  
    Telling that unseen Love was near ;  
But failing which, in storm and mist,  
    It sank, while thou went'st soft and fair,  
For evermore a darkened joy,  
A happiness thou didst destroy,  
    O heedless heart !

Child of high heaven and hell beneath,  
    O man, beware !  
In mysteries of life and death,  
Of joy, despair, thy feet are set ;  
    All things are big with suffering,  
And in thy lightest act are met,  
    And prisoned up on folded wing,  
Gigantic forces, good or ill,  
    Which way thou lett'st them loose at last.  
O walk in prayer, be tender still,  
    And reverent move, lest from the past  
Rise as thy curse some darkened joy,  
Some happiness thou didst destroy,  
    O man, beware !

## FAILURE.

ART thou nigh beaten in the battle dread,  
Beaten down on thy knee, and sore bestead ?

Then on thy knee  
Beneath the stars to the great whole upsoar,  
In dust and darkness worship and adore.

Is thy sword shivered in thy helpless hands,  
Smiting the wrong that still thy force withstands ?

Then in thy heart,  
Thy fainting heart, the splinters hide, that so  
Thy blood may richer for the world's life flow.

Dost thou weep bitter tears o'er hopes foregone,  
O'er ills unrighted, faith belied, undone ?

Arise, praise God !  
Who gives thee deep-sea pearls of priceless worth,  
To diadem the right discrowned on earth.

Are all thine efforts fruitless, vain, ill-spèd,  
Futile and weak as broken ends of thread ?

Yea, even so !

Of broken shells He maketh, so He wills,  
The everlasting marble of His hills.

‘ Evil is all too strong,’ dost fainting cry ?

‘ It conquers life and labour, let me die ! ’

Yet ere thou die,

Show thou the stronger : good that conquers death,  
Failing, grows strong, struck down, but wins new  
breath.

Out of the tumbling deeps comes thy last cry,

‘ There is no God, what good to toil and die ? ’

Go to, faint heart !

Strike from the dark the light that proves the Light,  
No God ? Create Him, dying for the right !

## ABSOLVO TE.

## I.

I MADE an idol secretly,  
And hugged and kissed it in the dark,  
And let my life blood run to waste ;  
Until, all wan and faint, I rose in haste,  
And in the fire, hoping that none would mark,  
Remorseful cast my hugg'd impiety ;  
And in her rosy palms, the flame  
A moment darkening, caught my hidden shame,  
Then into molten jewels wrought it bright,  
And made it into upward-springing light,  
While fell a fluttering sigh from heaven :  
    ' Go, sin no more,  
    Thou art forgiven.'

## II.

I fouled my garments, walking fast  
And furious in forbidden ways ;  
Then shame-struck plunged them in a spring,  
That of the stainless blue ran murmuring ;  
And all her limpid soul in dim amaze,  
Her azure heavens put out, grew overcast ;  
But brightening soon, she washed the stain  
Away, and left my garments white again ;  
Then, all absolving, spread her beamy net,  
And bade her blue Forget-me-nots forget,  
While came a murmur soft from heaven :  
    ‘Go, sin no more,  
    Thou art forgiven.’

## III.

I spake in bitter hate one day,  
And jangling beat a jarring chord,  
Nor would have done for any man ;  
But the mild air nimbly my wrath outran,



And from my lips washed off the bitter word,  
Washed with a smell of balm and dews away ;  
And o'er the jarring place she shook,  
Her nearest skylark's song in mild rebuke,  
And her torn silence healed with hum of bees,  
From the next woodbine murmuring at ease ;  
Then breathed in leafy sighs from heaven :  
    ' Go, sin no more,  
    Thou art forgiven.'

## IV.

I wrought a foulness on the earth,  
Then sickening with its evil breath,  
Thrust the dead carcase in the ground,  
Lest any saw me peering furtive round ;  
But the earth mildly hid it up beneath  
Her bosom's folds, and at her springtime's birth,  
Of that foul rottenness below,  
She made her apple-blossom's rosy snow,  
And all her herbs that rooted from it grew,  
Smelled but a goodly smell of rain and dew,

While her glad birds sang straight from heaven :

‘Go, sin no more,  
Thou art forgiven.’

## v.

Ah, wondrous blessed world of ours !

Ah, fountain opened evermore

For all uncleanness ! minister  
Of elemental love that everywhere  
About me flows, and works in sea and shore,  
In fire and air, with love’s absolving powers.

Oh let thy gentleness make me great,  
That I may keep all day the simple state  
Of thy pure springs, thy blowing clover, skies  
Of morn and evening, stars, and odorous sighs ;  
Nor need again that voice from heaven :

‘Go sin no more,  
Thou art forgiven.’

## THE SUPREME KISS.

LIGHTLY we kissed and parted,  
One kiss of many more to be ;  
Nor once behind the kiss, light-hearted,  
The moanings heard in thought  
Of the irrevocable sea ;  
Nor the light dippings caught  
Of the inexorable oar  
To waft thee to the undiscovered shore ;  
Nor heard the ghostly wind of Nevermore  
Shrill thro' the house and sob about the door ;  
Nor even in a dream—  
So deep a sleep life sleeps,  
Rocked on the everlasting deeps—  
Felt the eternity  
Roll in 'twixt thee and me,  
That made that careless kiss supreme.

## IN MY GARDEN.

WHAT shall I gather thee, Belovèd ?

What shall I gather thee ?

Roses, red roses,

Roses for thee and me ?

My cheek is pale, and thine is wan,

And one is white and marble cold

As the cold stones 'tis pillowed on,

While the great earth is onward rolled.

Our rose of morn is faded in the east,

Our rose of life is overblown,

And drops in vacant sunsets down the west,

Instinct with death and dear love flown

Gather no roses,

No roses, Love, for thee and me.

What shall I gather thee, Belovèd ?

What shall I gather thee ?

Lilies, white lilies,

Lilies for thee and me ?

Dead are the old white thoughts divine,

No golden dream shrined lily-wise

Lurks at thy saddened heart and mine,

No vision of the unspotted skies ;

The outcast comes to sleep within thy breast,

And sounds of woe and sights of wrong

Have smirched our whiteness, while we fight

Foul ills on helpless blood grown strong.

Gather no lilies,

No lilies, Love, for me and thee.

What shall I gather thee, Belovèd ?

What shall I gather thee ?

Posies, sweet posies,

But what for thee and me ?

Primroses, wan as thine own smiles,

And like them dipped in sudden tears ?

Violets, with subtle odorous wiles

To call back the departed years,

And pierce us with our heart's sad secrets told ?

Daisies, our morning stars that set

At evening weeping ? Daffodils, whose gold

Redeems not Love, Death's thrall as yet ?

Gather not any,

Nay, none of these for me and thee.

What shall I gather, say, Belovèd ?

What shall I gather thee ?

Blossoms, bright blossoms,

Yet none for thee and me ?

Nay, but one flower beneath the light

My garden keeps for us apart,

Dark as a moonless summer night,

But with the day-star at her heart.

Still at our mortal touch her virtues die—

I may not gather it, my sweet ;

But one of God's great angels passing by,

One day shall pause, and at his feet

Gather dark Heartsease,

Heartsease, dear Love, for thee and me.

## LOVE'S QUESTION AND ANSWER.

WHAT art thou, O my life ! now he is gone,  
Now he is gone,  
And left thee lone,  
To smite sad-eyed the kindling morning skies,  
Each day with death's dull ever-new surprise,  
Now he is gone, thy dear one gone?  
My life replies,  
And plaining cries,  
' Only a last year's acorn cup to hold  
But empty rains that grasped the oak of old.'

What art thou, O my heart ! now he is gone,  
Now he is gone,  
Thy life, thine own,  
Wronging all lovely things beneath the sky  
That have no right to live now Love can die,  
Now he is gone, thy dear one gone?

My heart replies,  
My heart that dies,  
' A little bird tossed from the nest, dead, dead,  
I' the spring, while all the world sings overhead.'

What art thou, O my joy ! now he is gone,  
Now he is gone,  
And thou must moan,  
Counting the tedious years that may not bring  
His face, his voice, all empty of the spring,  
Now he is gone, thy dear one gone ?  
My joy replies,  
And farewell sighs,  
' A little star that fadeth from its place  
In a departed glow, and leaves no trace.'

What art thou, O my hope ! now he is gone  
Now he is gone  
A way unknown,  
Across a silent sea, unlit by sail,  
Unswept by wing, or thought, or footless gale,  
Now he is gone, thy dear one gone ?



204 LOVE'S QUESTION AND ANSWER.

My hope replies  
With yearning eyes,  
' A shadow with the lonely years increased,  
A lengthening shadow pointing to the east.'

## SPRING SADNESS.

O, it is not for me the Spring returns,  
And wakes the dust to live and bud and sing !  
For some dear dust there is the lost heart mourns,  
That knows no Spring.

O, it is not for me the bird athwart  
The woodland dells pours forth her plaintful moan !  
She loosens not the silence round my heart,  
Sweet voices gone.

O, it is not for me the primrose blows,  
Pale water-moons that gleam in dingles rare !  
My bough nor bud, nor leaf, nor blossom shows,  
My branch is bare.

O, it is not for me the cloud stoops low,  
Freshening each little bud and leaf unseen !  
These eyes have wept but barren showers of woe,  
That make nought green.

O, it is not for me the morn from night's  
Vast caves returns, the dark earth leaping o'er !  
The light returns ; the Life, the Light of lights,  
Returns no more.

For me the dim sweet eve, the cadent star,  
The glow that points to some rich end, the balm,  
That whispers inly of a rest afar,  
An endless calm.

*May 1868.*

‘Man fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth  
in one stay.’

Ah springs, ah Maytime sweet !  
In whose wet prints, by copse and stream,  
Blue violets like water gleam  
Beneath your flying feet ;  
Ye snatch away my childhood brief,  
While yet endures your opening leaf,  
And with those white years strew your way,  
Ah well-a-day !  
Like shed fruit blossom, fallen May.

Ah summers, summers fair !  
That play about the naked thorn  
With such sweet wooings, lo, one morn,  
The rose, the rose is there !

Ye snatch away my youth, my prime,  
While with your rose 'tis yet Love's time,  
And all its burning loves decay,  
Ah well-a-day !  
Like rose-leaves trodden into clay.

Ah autumns, autumns rare !  
That with your dead gold stud once more  
The fruited wall spring silvers o'er,  
And vales red plenty wear ;  
Ye snatch away my riper years,  
My fruit in thin thought disappears,  
While yet your lusty apples sway,  
Ah well-a-day !  
My ends like fallen fruit decay.

Ah winters, winters cold !  
Blue-hollowed in the setting sun,  
Purpling your russet woodlands dun,  
Mute snows in silence fold ;  
Ye snatch away my last grey days,

While yet your withered beech-leaf stays,  
Till by soft spinning night and day—  
So ends the lay—  
The whole of me is whirled away.

## EVENING CLOUDS.

YE evening clouds ! ye phantom heights !  
That silently come out above our life,  
And stand agaze with God across its strife,  
Rosy and rapt with lovely dying lights—  
Ah sad, ah beauteous mountain shore,  
Once seen, then seen no more !

Had I thy wings, O evening wind,  
Could but these palpitating mortal feet  
Yon rosy crags and shining sun-slopes beat,  
Deep in your azure hollows should I find  
Old loves, old faiths, old hopes of yore,  
Once seen, then seen no more ?

‘ And the star they saw in the east went before them.’

TO G——

I LOVE thee much as I might love a star,  
 Thy day and night that makes thy purpose clear  
 Shine not within this world of mine, nor are  
 Concentric with my swiftly-turning sphere.  
 The storms that beat on thee,  
 Wake in my lightest aspen leaf no sigh,  
 Nor shake thy steadfast shining light to me.  
 ‘ I have no part in thee at all,’ I cry,  
 My solitary light that burns afar,  
 My star.

The same Voice that informs thy shining way,  
 Bade me come to Him on the bitter seas,  
 Where the dead faces stare up through the spray,  
 With hollow mouths that drink the briny lees ;  
 To toil without relief,



And clasp in mine cold shipwrecked hands forlorn,  
Where billows beat loud death against the reef,  
Till all my woman's heart is rent and torn,  
When looking up I see thy light afar,  
My star.

Only when strength is spent, and faith burns low,  
And I am flung up on some barren shore,  
And only hear an outer deep of woe  
Call to a moaning deep within ; no more  
May pierce the mystery,  
Nor know that heaving waste of waters dark  
Still owns the sway of secret light on high ;  
Nor looking up may any longer mark  
Thy jewelled lamp that shines no more afar,  
My star.

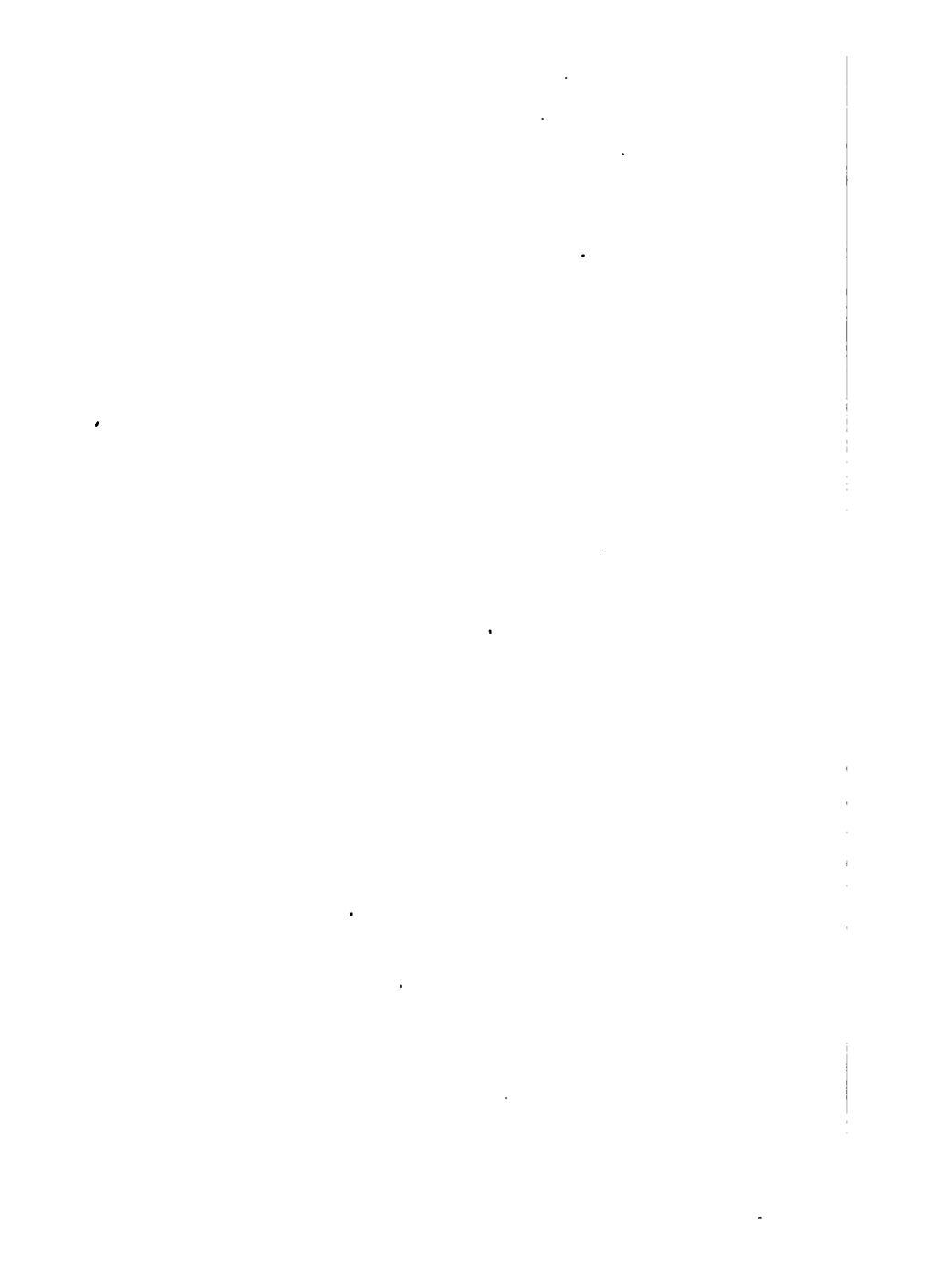
Ah then that dark despairing thing hath grace  
To draw thee from thy sphere of primal joys ;  
Out of the fire is shaped a human face,  
Out of the splendour trembling comes a voice,  
Broken with man's deep pain,

And God's great pity, and as in a cloud  
I know thee there to lift me up again,  
A Light incarnate into Love ; and bowed,  
I worship by thy side, no more afar,  
My star.

Ah sweet and melancholy love, so lone,  
So deep, so far, and sad as the last flight  
Of solitary birds, when day is done,  
On their lone way across the dying light.  
Never to know thee more,  
Never to touch thine inmost soul with mine !  
For when these faltering feet have reached the shore,  
I shall behold thee fade in light divine,  
In dazzling depths of burning light afar,  
My star.



## SONNETS



## MEDUSA.

GAZE thou upon the face, serenely bright,  
Of Him whose countenance is as the sun  
Shining in midmost strength, ere yet is run  
His race of fire. Gaze, nor avert thy sight ;  
Shrink not for any bitterness of light,  
Nor nightward fallings of thy soul, undone  
By heavenly lightnings till high use is won.  
So when Life's Gorgon face, with dread affright,  
Stoops close upon thy shuddering flesh, nor flee  
Thou must, but gaze, or fail in heavenward might,  
Fronting unblenched the freezing mystery :  
Then that dear Splendour stamped upon thy sight,  
May blur the deathful features, and for thee,  
Light-charmed, and safe, may smite them into night.

THE INFINITE WITHIN AND  
WITHOUT.

O THOU who hast the keys, thou hast o'erhead  
    Unlocked an infinite of space unknown—  
    No blue inverted bowl now shuts thee down—  
Behind thy back an infinite, as dread,  
Of time, and on the rubbish thou dost tread  
    Of old dead worlds and age on age outgrown.  
    The weight of two eternities of stone  
Thou bear'st, the living standing 'mid the dead.  
Guard thou the infinite within thy soul,  
    For as deep sea-things can but breathe and be,  
    By having that within which weighs without,  
Else crushed by ponderous seas that o'er them roll ;  
    So thou to live must breathe eternity,  
    Or by dead Infinities have thy life crushed out.

## THE INVULNERABLE LIFE.

THOU art immortal till thy work is done ;  
All things are under oath to harm thee not.  
The deep sea is not deep enough, I wot,  
To drown thee, all the world too strait has grown  
To give thee grave-room ; fire, that spareth none,  
In thy frail flesh hath neither part nor lot,  
Felt as moist whistling wind, not parching hot ;  
Rude storms but waft thee to thy ends foreknown.  
But when the appointed task is brought about,  
For which thy crescent moons knew bright increase,  
Then to the worms is cast thy life outworn ;  
The weakest moth may flap thy life-light out,  
The gnat may prick thee into nothingness,  
And shrill thy requiem on her slender horn.



ON THE UPPER GLACIER,  
GRINDELWALD.

## I.

WHAT Titan agony has rent and torn

Thine ice-bound frame, and on thy glittering brow  
Stupendous furrows traced, thou Titan-born?

While from thy riven heart that will not bow,  
Thy frozen tears are poured in torrents still.

What Hand thy stainless sapphire wrought of old  
To these fantastic spires and turrets chill,

And pinnacles that drink the moonlight cold,  
And to thy feet thy crystal boulders hurled?

Awe-struck I stand and gaze, eternal Love,  
On the dread forces that have made the world,

And like some Alpine harebell poised above  
A roar of waters, trembling to their breath,  
Yet drinking still fresh life from shuddering death.

## II.

Nay, narrow Heart, more awful forces go  
To make the rain-drop on the wayside thorn,  
Forces that lock and into union grow,  
With the loud shock of avalanches born.  
Ah gentle Power ! that tam'st thy heavy hand  
To touch in benediction, not to crush,  
Thy frailest creature, and, at thy command,  
Dread energies unharmed round us rush ;  
Bidding thy thunders poise a snowdrop's bell,  
And the wild force that rent this glacier, woo  
The winged seed to falter in the dell ;  
And lo, thy waters, wrought, when worlds were new,  
With crash of deathful forces, mild as balm,  
Lie trembling in an infant's shell-pink palm.

## RAILWAY STEAM.

## L

Is this the power that has transformed the world ?  
This fainting thing the tenderest grassy blade  
Can pierce, torn by each bramble in the glade ;  
Or as it floats in thinnest wreaths uncurled,  
Caught in the little aspen-palms empearled,  
That chafe and fret it in their babbling shade  
To nothing ; this that is, and is not, swayed  
Lighter than thistle-down by light airs whirled ;  
A momentary breath that scarce in May  
The bedded gold can tarnish by the brook ;  
That yet bound in by strong necessities,  
Nor at its wayward will left free to stray,  
The earth beneath its flying thunder shook,  
And poured behind it streaming vales and skies,

## LIBERTY AND NECESSITY.

## II.

O THOU who hast shut in my living will  
With necessary laws on every side,  
Let me not deem in arbitrary pride  
Thy purpose is in these to thwart me still,  
Crushed into weakness that can nought fulfil ;  
Rather the everlasting Arms and wide,  
Leaning on which I mount, be these descried,  
Too strong to break or bend to wayward ill ;  
Resistances whose back-stroke is my power,  
Else dissipated in resistless air,  
And left with free-will impotence for dower.  
Vast are the forces that oppose man's will ?  
So vast the liberty wherewith they square,  
Since of man's power they give the measure still.

## BITTER SPRINGS.

## I.

How bitter are the springs of human mirth !  
From him who, in his garret, with one hand,  
Shot his keen shafts of wit through all the land,  
With her distraught, his best beloved on earth,  
Tied to the other with a silken band,  
Nor while men laughed sun-struck beside their  
hearth  
Knew his heart broke that gave those lightnings birth ;  
To him who shared the awful guiltless brand  
Of her he loved ; and hand in hand they paced,  
Shedding mute tears, oft as the shadow came,  
That grim disfeatured all her gentle worth ;  
Who yet with such delicious laughter graced  
Life's funeral meats, and lovely lambent flame  
From bitter whelming waves of woe flashed forth.

## HUMAN SMILES.

## II.

METHINKS but God and His good angels dare  
To look behind these smiles of ours, and see  
What ghastly shapes they hide of misery.  
Does He so give us leave to use His fair  
And blessed light? that in His azure air  
Hides with her smile no darker mystery  
Than lesser glories of the stars may be ;  
Or skylarks hidden in her mid-day glare,  
Themselves but darkened stars that palpitate  
In ecstasy of music strong and keen,  
In lieu of light. But when He lent, unasked,  
His sunbeam to us in a smile, then straight  
Lost love, despair, rage, hate, are with it masked,  
And hearts behind it creep and break unseen.

## ON DISTANT FIRING.

Is that indeed the deathful cannon's roar,  
Deep-mouth'd with discord, blood, fierce hate,  
despair?

Scarcely it seems a ripple of blue air,  
That breaks on yonder wind-loved aspens hoar,  
Nor frets their lightest leaf to silver. Hark !

The breezy murmur of the hill-side bee,  
That makes her life one sweetness, distantly  
Is heard across it. Up aloft the lark

Pierces in happy scorn that air-born wrong,  
With the keen silver arrows of her song ;  
And with their thistle-down the hill-sides lone  
Confuse it, lightly tossed along the wind.

Great Mother, so let every jarring tone  
In thy wide lap of peace its requiem find.

Freshwater, 1874.

## LOVE AND A WAVE.

SHE stood upon a sea-girt rock, my Love,  
All her fair form, that held her voiceless thought,  
Poised silent as yon rosy cloud above  
The tumbling wastes of water tempest-fraught,  
That in her bosom hides the evening star ;  
And round her beauty spread a mystery,  
Apocalyptic lightnings of the sea,  
Voices and deep-mouth'd thunders from afar ;  
Until she seemed, to love's fantastic fears,  
A thing apart from human uses, all  
Too exquisite for kiss, and touch, and call ;  
Till a great wave a moment veiled her charms,  
And sent her beauty hung with sea-born tears,  
And thrilled with happy laughter, to my arms.



## BOY AND GIRL.

## I.

Two children on whose cheek the deathless rose  
    Blooms in perpetual summer brave of hue ;  
Whose rosy flower-palms clasp and close  
    Like chilly clover-leaves in morning dew.  
A boy and girl, who on each other look  
    Intent, with the sweet steadfast glad surprise,  
    With which in spring the first new-opened eyes  
Look from their shining lids by copse and brook ;  
Then sudden chase each other wild with glee,  
    Or o'er some water-mirror bending bow,  
And clasping, kiss, with sidelong glance to see  
    If the two phantom children far below,  
That glimmering mock them from the hollow blue,  
Like them will meet and kiss each other too.

## MAN AND MAID.

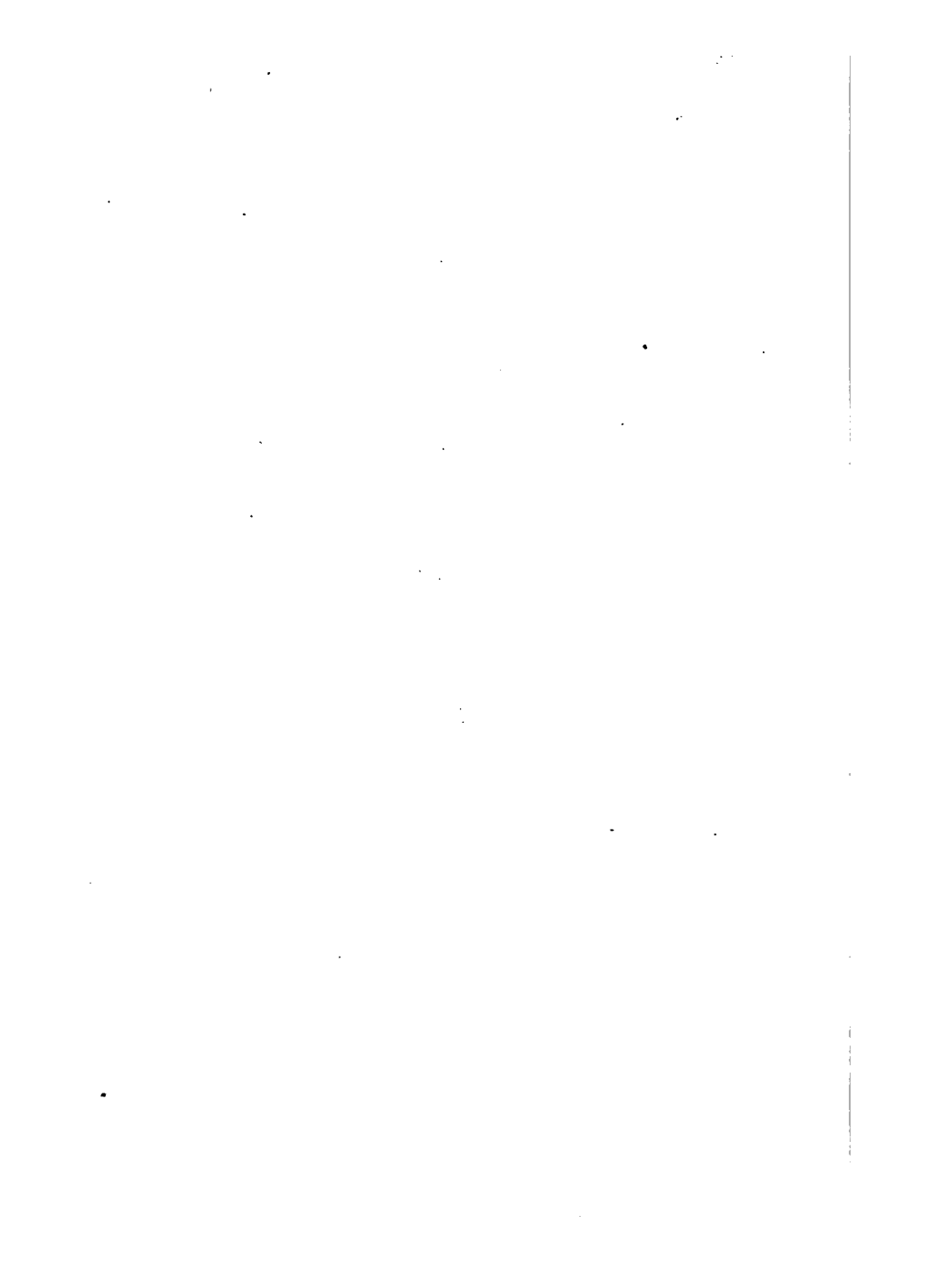
## II.

A YOUTH, a maid, but on her cheeks the rose,  
That keeps no tryst with summer suns, but feeds  
On Love alone, and with him comes and goes ;  
And wandering through the lonely meads,  
Two hands that pendent shyly clasp to feel  
The mystic sunshine quiver through the frame,  
And eyes that meet not for delicious shame,  
While round her, trembling, his embraces steal,  
As a tall lily shakes when yellow bees  
Are rifling all her sweets in golden ease ;  
And words begun that break off falteringly,  
Like fruited boughs in summer winds asway,  
That break with their own wealth ; and lips—ah me !  
That meeting, heaven and earth do pass away.

## A PRAYERLESS SABBATH.

SCARCE have I breathed to Thee this day one word,  
And yet my heart held commune with Thee still.  
Not a field-flower I stoop and gather, Lord,  
But with Thy gracious loveliness I fill  
My empty hand. And as the twilight breeze,  
Born in the fragrant dusk, with sudden gush,  
Pours through the darkling heart of full-leaved trees  
The hidden moon, in golden showers and rush  
Of lights, so all the rhythmic flow of thought  
That filled my soul revealed Thy hidden light,  
And through my bosom scattered it unsought.  
The child walks sometimes silent, yet holds tight  
His father's hand. So, though no cry is cried,  
Who walks in beauty walketh by Thy side.

## GNOMIDIA



## GNOMIDIA.

*The Shadow feared of Man.*

## I.

Most men go witless to their graves like bears  
 Down a pole backwards, till all unawares  
 They fall therein ; nor once their stout heart dares  
 Turn round and face the leap that scares  
 From the last wave-lapped step of life's dread stair,  
 Into the unplumbed darkness, where, oh where ?

*Man's Recusancy.*

## II.

The man who saw the whole world drowned,  
 No sooner safe on shore was found  
 Than lo, himself was drowned in wine.  
 Ah Lord, whereto Thy discipline ?

Man bales thy judgments out of mind,  
 And, to thy warnings madly blind,  
 Under Thy rosy arch of light,  
 Makes his own deluge in despite.

**Laws made, Remake us not.**

III.

Laws are but looking-glasses ; they  
 But show us as we are, nor may  
 Give us new shapes ; the crooked will  
 Left crooked still.

**The White Gap.**

IV.

Pleasures and wealth too oft like hangmen show ;  
 They hide men's faces with a covering,  
 So that their ends they see not as they go,  
 Then hang them in their feasts and chambering.

**Whipping-fops.**

## v.

Be not, for shame, a top that only goes  
 When it is whipped, then tumbles in the dirt,  
 When sick, at prayers, at dice, unhurt ;  
 A nine-days' saint that smacks but of the rod,  
 A swine that makes his litter of the rose,  
 Flouting Beelzebub alike and God.

**The Blood is the Life.**

## vi.

Yesterday's living sacrifice  
 Is but to-day's dead carcase ; rise  
 Nor dare to offer the All-Living death,  
 And dead decay ;  
 But fresh life-blood pour out, and warm new breath  
 Each new to-day.



**Who hath the Keys of Death and Hell.**

## VII.

The grave is the dark keyhole of our life,  
That holds within it locked the mystery

Wherewith our days are rife.

But we, alack ! have lost the key ;  
And now we can but peep and pry  
At the beyond, or bow our ear,  
Some far-off harmony to hear.

And some do sigh,  
' 'Tis utter dark,' and some, ' 'Tis glory,' cry,  
Waiting till He who hath the keys comes by.

**Fiat Justitia, Ruat Caelum.**

## VIII.

Quench hell, burn heaven, yet do the right ;  
And though thou be but momentary dust,  
Yet rise and set with stars in dust's despite,

With a wronged majesty of light,  
Making thine ' ought,' concentric with their ' must.'

**Dieu et mon Droit.**

## IX.

Thy rights? Go to, thou hast but one—  
 To do thy duty, other none ;  
 Save some six feet of earth perchance to ask  
 To hold the refuse of thy finished task.

**The Regency of the Will.**

## X.

The highest in thee is but weak  
 While thou art here, thy rightful king,  
 But in his cradle. Thou, bespeak  
 Thy prayers, maidens whose vesture white  
 Smells of the myrrh and cassia bright  
 Of those high fields from whence he came,  
 To wait upon him. Set thy will  
 To guard his gate of life from ill ;  
 Call thy whole kingdom by his name,  
 Nor fling him off with half a claim ;  
 Until he spring,  
 Full-sceptred, and full-grown,  
 A majesty secure upon his throne.

*Held in the Hand.*

## XI.

A jewelled goblet with a broken foot  
 Thou art, who canst but upright stand  
 When held within the Master's hand ;  
     Else thou dost spill  
     His light within thee still,  
 And his rich glories into dust transmute.

*The Serpent-rod.*

## XII.

Thank Love Almighty for thy sins, O man !  
 Else thou might rot and die, till time outran,  
     Hugging in peace thy hidden ill,  
     And deep impurity of will.

But from thy breast glides forth this spotted snake,  
 Deep-eyed with hell, and dashed with fiery flake,  
     A poisonous life from thy will won,  
     That now without thy will lives on.

Not thee, ah, never thee, but ever thine ;  
 Ever it fronts thee loathing, fouls thy shrine,

Drugs with its poison all thy lust,  
 And smites thy manhood into dust.  
  
 Till mirrored in those myriad eyes of hell,  
 Thyself thou seest, thyself now known too well ;  
 Abysmal depths of dark and light  
 Sprung in thy bosom's infinite.  
  
 Fleeing thyself, thou find'st thyself for ever ;  
 The forces of thy being rush together,  
 And knit into the spiritual will,  
 No more caught in with chance and ill.  
  
 And that foul snake, but as Love's blossoming wand  
 Cast in the dust, thou know'st ; now in His hand  
 A rod of wonders made, to smite  
 Thy pathway over to the light.

### **The Master Carver.**

#### XIII.

Not to make chips the Master takes His axe ;  
 From its keen lightnings think not thou to hide ;  
 Nor will His arm relax,  
 Till all thy wooden pride

Into the carven work He hews,  
 That lightly runs about His shrine,  
 And blossoms up about His feet divine  
 In lilies washed with sacramental dew.

**The Children's Garden.**

XIV.

God digs a ditch 'twixt day and day,  
 That so our feet not far may stray ;  
 Lets in bright inlets of death's sea,  
 Each four-and-twenty hours,  
 To shut us from our misery,  
 Breaking it small to match our powers ;  
 And of His bright eternity  
 Gives us but little plots of light,  
 Marked off by cool, deep trenches of the night,  
 Wherein fair flowers and healing herbs to raise ;  
 And makes a children's garden of our days.

**Through Pain to Paradise.**

XV.

Under the flaming sword alone,  
 That turns all ways to guard the gate,

Canst thou, O man ! pass back again  
 Into thy paradise foregone,  
 And take again thy kingly state.  
 Deep in thy heart as burning pain  
 It works, and shapes thee to high ends,  
 And, hewing out God's thought in thee,  
 Lops the weak will that deathward bends ;  
 Until, a sword of victory,  
 Slaked in thy life-blood, lo, it yields  
 Thee passage to the Immortal Fields.

### Constancy to Truth.

#### XVI.

Follow not what the many teach,  
 Who cling like mussels each to each,  
 Nor shape thy creed  
 To suit their meed ;  
 Like the lone limpet to the rock,  
 Cleave thou to Truth, though all men mock.

**Discourse not at Random.**

## XVII.

Who fitted is to mark thy words, first note ;  
 Pour not thy physic down a dead man's throat.

**The Rose her own Evidence.**

## XVIII.

Do men abuse thee ? Care not thou !  
 Rose-attar smells not less, I trow,  
 Of her own mother's bosom, in that men  
 Do ' wormwood ' write upon the odorous flask.  
 Sweeten harsh labels with thy rose, and then  
 No bitter name thy fragrant deeds can mask.

**Strife.**

## XIX.

Who kindles strife a fire doth light,  
 Whereat his enemies  
 Do warm their hands in his despite,  
 But keeps the smoke for his own eyes.

**No Law, No Liberty.**

## XX.

Thou wouldst be free ; yet be not free  
 As dust and straws and feathers be,  
     That eddy aimless in the air,  
 Possessed and driven here and there.

Own a Divine necessity  
 Within thy human liberty,  
     Then circling to thine inner law,  
 A star's great orbit thou wilt draw.

**The Saddest Tears.**

## XXI.

THE saddest tears not over cares  
 Are wept, but over answered prayers.



**Obedience to Nature.**

XXII.

NATURE herself thou dost obey,  
The weak, she rules, are ravened by the strong ;  
Let preachers preach, and moralists prate of wrong,  
Her instincts hold their constant sway.

Nay, man, thy nature is to be  
Godlike, with attributes that regal show ;  
A life of miracle within thee know,  
That from all lower law sets free.

A life that gives thee Godlike power  
To walk all deathful waters, storms to still  
Of loudest passion, bid the palsied will  
Rise up and claim her freedom's dower.

Thy mountain springs of being rise  
Behind this phantom show of sky and earth ;  
High possibilities in thee have birth—  
The God within thee realise !

Be true to Nature's lofty plan ;  
 Cut not thy sceptre high from any hedge ;  
 The lower in thee to thy highest pledge,  
 And make the beast still serve the man.

**The Devil's Coin.**

XXIII.

TAKE not the devil's coin, beware !  
 He shows thee but Sin's smiling face,  
 The back of Sin he hides with care,  
 Lest thou refuse his proffered grace.

Look not upon the crownèd face,  
 That bids thee wanton in delight,  
 King it o'er God's restraining grace,  
 And rebel reign in His despite.

Turn thou the golden bait right round,  
 Look well upon the further side ;  
 The sin passed through, and thou discrowned,  
 To death betrayed by life that lied.

No smiling face is now to see,  
 A man, lo, with a dragon fights ;  
 A loathly hydra loosed by thee,  
 Thy surfeit-maddened appetites.

Oh, well for thee if to thy hand  
 Come some Ithuriel spear to slay ;  
 And bid thy writhen manhood stand,  
 Scathed, but to beasts no more a prey.

**Per Angusta ad Augusta.**

XXIV.

'This wrong has ever been, this sin  
 Will last the world out,' do men cry ?  
 'Nature herself pleads a necessity.'

But thou, trust thou the law within ;  
 By that supreme reality,  
 Dare thou to give all history the lie.

Yea, by that uncreated light,  
 Whereof this solid earth and sky  
 Are but the fitful shadows cast on high :

Rise up and cry, supreme in right,  
 ' This wrong is dead and damned to-day  
 Though through all ages it had held its sway ! '

And broken though thine arm, thy spear  
 Nought but a bruised straw, yet smite  
 The ancient regent lie in all men's sight.

And though men flout at thee and jeer,  
 A gnat that buzzes up against a wall  
 Of rock in hopes to beat it to its fall ;

Though stronger grow the wrong each day,  
 And though beneath its iron feet  
 It pound thee small, and all thine ends defeat ;

Yet shall the world confused, astray,  
 Grow polar to thee, slowly taught,  
 And crystal out a Kosmos round thy thought.

### **Distiches.**

XXV.

THE straightest bow must still be curved and bent,  
 That arrows swift in heavenward flight be sent.

The sap impeded in the noded shoot,  
Is still the radiant birth of leaf and fruit.

The backward wave that climbs and falls in vain,  
Still makes the onward strength of currents plain.

The forward motion balked and backward beat,  
Is still the trembling birth of music sweet.

## II.

Thy will must still be bent in storm and dark  
From thine own ends, for God to hit His mark.

Thy springing hopes must still obstruction know,  
For flower and fruit to crown the Master's brow.

The frustrate good that fools that life of thine,  
May show the onward sweep of His design.

Thine upward, onward, still must know defeat,  
For thee one note in His great psalm to beat.

Thy projects of a day must broken be  
Into the plans of His eternity.

**'Das Anglückliche Bewusstseyn.'**

HEGEL.

XXVI.

DIVIDE, divide !

Be this thy philosophic pride,

Hold nothing fast ;

And if thy naked eye at last

Hold on to some unsevered whole,

Yet still press on to wisdom's goal,

And with the lenses' keener eye,

Shatter the crystal. Decompose

Thy mother's tears, her dying sigh,

Into their atoms duly told ;

Phosphates that cabbage-stalks disclose,

Mucus and gases manifold ;<sup>1</sup>

Contract thy worship to a cell,

Then to a point invisible,

<sup>1</sup> "'Tiens," dit-il, en voyant les pleurs de sa femme, "j'ai décomposé les larmes. Les larmes contiennent un peu de phosphate de chaux, de chlorure de sodium, du mucus, et de l'eau." —BALZAC, *La Recherche de l'Absolu*.

Divide, divide !  
Be this thy philosophic pride,  
Hold nothing fast,  
And thou wilt hit the truth at last—  
When round the corner comes a thoughtless gust,  
And man and matter vanish into dust.

## THE MIND OF MAN.

O WONDROUS mind of man, that art not man,  
But a strange medley wrought about his soul  
By the enchantress Thought, who prisons him  
Within the idols of her magic cave ;  
Strange shapes and visitants beyond the will,  
By which the holiest must stand betrayed.

O mind of man, that art all things by turn !  
Lo, now a temple, where the young-eyed choirs  
Do hymning make the silent vast of heaven  
About us audible ; where light instinct  
With heavenly meaning grows, and seeing God,  
Adoring blushes into martyr's blood ;  
And th' inarticulate deep heart of storms  
Breaks golden-throated into gusty praise.



When suddenly a transept door bursts wide,  
And lo, goat-footed satyrs chase, hot-breath'd,  
A naked nymph, and the high arches fade  
To boughs that pluck at her to have her down ;  
And like to rent and flying leaves, the hymns  
Are scattered wildly on the fading air.

And then the shadows shift and thou dost seem  
A home, with children sleeping in their beds,  
And shadowed lights and household talk subdued,  
That, like the murmur of a settling bee,  
Ceases a moment, then begins again.  
When swift as thought an ambush fight bursts up  
About the door, and groans of men are heard,  
And the fierce struggle madly heaves and throbs,  
And all the herby lea is trodden down,  
And the mild daisy sets in blood.

And then

Again thou risest to the inner eye,  
A palace wrought with fretted gold and gems,  
Wrung from abysmal deeps and stifling dark

Where magic mirrors, hung on every side,  
Flash back dead yesterdays and sunken suns ;  
And Time into a chisel beats his scythe,  
And runs the purpose of the ages round  
The marble frieze ; and master spirits store  
Their life-blood from the world's great presses crushed,  
The vintage by the Angel of the sun  
Trodden, and stored about the oaken walls.  
And the rich banquet glows with molten gems,  
While the swift feet of dancers beat in time,  
With clasped hands and rhythmic motions sweet.  
When noiselessly the tessellated floor  
Splits like a cloud beneath the flying feet,  
And lets the dungeon in upon the feast,  
The clank of chains, blood-rusted torture wheels,  
And tedious long-drawn yawnings of despair,  
Shut in for ever on itself ; and all  
The precious marbles sweat with dungeon dew,  
The music dies in stricken sighs of men,  
And hollow laughter hides a chill dismay.

And through the ever-shifting medley walks  
The discoverable soul apart ;

An alien birth with a wronged majesty  
That wraps the silence of the skies about it,  
Like that disdainful hero 'mid the throng  
Of twittering shades by name invoked in vain ;  
Nor ever to keen philosophic doubt,  
Nor tortured questionings of chemic art  
Answers beside the mortal blood-filled trench,  
Nor breaks her scornful silence through a life.

## THE EARTH-SONG OF LOVE.

In paradise there danced and played  
A radiant child among the flowers ;  
But none of all the heavenly powers  
His name could tell, his lips were dumb,  
'Tell us thy name,' the angels prayed—  
He only looked and smiled.

In his blue eyes the morning woke,  
The asphodels that light they wear,  
Caught from the meteors of his hair ;  
But like a star his thought was lost,  
In the deep dawn that slowly broke  
Whene'er he looked and smiled.

They led him by the babbling river,  
They wooed him in the songful bowers,  
They bound his brow with deathless flowers,

'Sweeter thy voice than bird or river,  
Wilt thou not speak to us for ever?'

He only looked and smiled.

All things his radiant influence own,  
Shy birds with tender bills would sip  
The dew from off his blossom-lip,  
The flowers for him had sweet home-looks,  
The breezes sighed of him alone ;  
On all he looked and smiled.

In wrath at length the angels rose,  
His silence makes a want on high  
In all, and our hosannas die  
Like faded palms upon his lips,  
That ne'er in song nor praise uncloze ;  
He only looked and smiled.

Then with a flaming sword of fire  
They drove him to a far-off world,  
A wandering star in darkness hurled,

A dim sad spot by some called Earth,  
There to atone celestial ire ;  
He only weeping smiled.

But when men saw the radiant Child,  
They tore the flowers from off his brow,  
With cruel thorns they crown him now,  
His heart they pierce, his infant palms ;  
But now no more—mocked, pierced, defiled—  
He only looked and smiled.

For from his lips the iron band  
Was loosened, lo, a song he sang,  
A strange sweet song that heavenward rang,  
While into roses burst the thorns,  
A tongue no man could understand  
He sang, and singing, smiled.

He sang ; men met each other's eyes,  
With a strange sweet surprise, and smiled ;  
He sang ; the mother clasped her child,

'Tis bliss to suffer, Sweet, for thee,  
And sweet the love that loving dies'—  
And still he sang and smiled.

He sang ; the son sought out his mother,  
'Thy pangs have sweetened love to me,  
Let me but toil, dear Heart, for thee ;'  
He sang ; 'Ah haste, Death comes apace,  
We have but time to love, O brother'—  
Loud, loud he sang, and smiled.

He sang ; the lover clasped his bride,  
'Twere ecstasy for thee to die !'  
He sang ; and low she made reply,  
'Love's shame makes sacrifice complete,  
My maidenhood for thee, Love, died—  
Sweet, sweet, he sang and smiled.

And aged folk crept out to look  
On the new gladness of the earth,  
By little children's hands led forth ;

Dark guilt Love's bright occasion grew,  
The dead a rapt expression took,  
As still he sang and smiled.

And loud he sang, and louder yet,  
Until that wild sweet song he sang  
From earth to highest heaven sprang,  
And with angelic symphonies  
That strange new cadence mingling met—  
And still he sang and smiled.

A richer diapason swells,  
In rapt surprise the angels gaze,  
New meaning gains the ancient praise,  
In depths of light, a heart of pain,  
To them Love's hidden nature tells,  
As still he sang and smiled.

And that wild star that lonely beat  
With death and sin the homeless blue,  
But for Love's broken home they knew,



Whence his deep fragrance through all space  
Is poured, till all the worlds are sweet  
With love that suffering sings.

And still he sings that mystic song,  
That makes sad earth and heaven one—  
Sings, 'Love is sacrifice alone,  
And God the love that ever dies,  
That all may live immortal, strong,  
In love that, dying, sings.'

## A THOUGHT FROM THE GERMAN.

OUR earthly anchors, downward cast, we loose  
 Through roaring glooms and gleaming deep-sea  
                   things,

To grapple mid the ancient bitter springs,  
 With death and darkness in the primal ooze.

Hurtled by huge sea-monsters in their strife,  
       Stared at by lidless eyes that never sleep,  
       Grappling the slippery tangles of the deep,  
 The human hope holds hardly on to life.

But since in man we touch on mysteries  
       That mock at sense and ever write it cross,  
       Flashed o'er the limits of his earthly loss,  
 Made heir of God's great possibilities :

262    A THOUGHT FROM THE GERMAN.

The anchor of our heavenly hope, behold,  
    We upward cast through depths of silent light,  
    And tideless azure, up beyond the night,  
Above the storm and blinding vapours' fold ;

Till grappling fast behind this veil of things,  
    Within the windless haven it moors our life,  
    Riding at ease through the wild tempest's strife,  
Safe anchored still 'mid Love's eternal springs.

# FROM THE PERSIAN.

THE gaunt-ribbed carcase of a homeless dog,  
Cast by the wayside down, a lifeless log.

One spurned him with his staff where stark he lay,  
One spat upon him ere he went his way.

Spake one : 'The rope about his neck behold ;  
I trow they hanged him for a thief of old.'

Another : 'See how both his ears are torn ;  
No fiercer brute to fight was ever born.'

A third, his garment muffling to his nose :  
'Faugh ! living or dead, he smells not of the rose.'

But from the crowd a mild voice passing, cries :  
'No pearl the whiteness of his teeth outvies.'

Then all men in their spirit knew, who heard,  
Jesus of Nazareth's must be that word.

For only He had love's divinity,  
Even in a dead dog some good to see.

## MAN'S GRATITUDE.

'I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds  
 With coldness still returning ;  
 Alas ! the gratitude of man  
 Has oftener left me mourning.'—*Wordsworth.*

GIVE but the gift that costs thee nought,  
 And men will praise thee to thy face,  
 And in their bosoms wear thy grace,  
 And hold thee dear in thought ;  
 And all the bough  
 Will burst in bud and blossom like a flame,  
 Shaming thy meagre service with its glow,  
 And grateful lips make honey of thy name.

But give what costs thee bitterest gall,  
 Enrich it with thy best laid low,  
 Redden it with thy life-blood's glow,  
 And round it with thine all ;

Ah, then beware

Lest our fond frail humanity thou trust ;

The heavy-fruited bough, too weak to bear,  
Will break, and bruising drop thee in the dust.

## LOVE.

## I.

Love the young-eyed, the beautiful,  
Fell asleep in a bed of lotus flowers,  
Rocked by the far-off currents cool,  
In the heat of the noontide hours.  
But a water-snake gnawed at the root of the flowers  
And the matted blossoms swept down with the  
stream,  
The strong dark river that rushes with power,  
The fathomless river of life.  
And Love awoke from his peaceful dream,  
And heard the dash and the strife  
Of the waters, and caught the distant roar  
Of the cataract freezing his balmy breath,  
And knew the thunders of death,  
And knew he would be no more.



And upstarting in agony vainly he sought  
To stay the force of the tide ; but was caught  
    In the deathful curves of the current,  
        And hurried along  
On the smooth dark swifts of the torrent ;  
And up to the fatal brink sweeping,  
    Heard the many-voiced song  
        Of the dark-bosomed siren daughters,  
And beheld the smooth swift plunge of the waters,  
    And the dull  
Vast mass of the foam in the shuddering shade  
That would bury his sweetness for evermore.  
    And he wept and he prayed,  
Who had been so happy and heedless before,  
And the vales were filled with the voice of his  
    weeping,  
    Love, the young-eyed, the beautiful.

## II.

And, moved by his grief and his beauty, the waters,  
    The deep dark waters,  
The many-voiced deep-bosomed siren daughters,

Whose clear cool song it is death to hear,  
Gave back the life that he craved to his prayer,  
But drew his soul after them evermore.  
And he left the paths and the brooks and the  
          meadows,  
Dewy and dappled with aspen shadows,  
    And trodden by sweet-breath'd kine ;  
The homesteads and flowery pastures fled,  
Where the long gold lights of the evening shine,  
And all the wide placid life he forsook  
Of the uplands in breezy silence outspread ;  
And faded his feet from the sleepy hill-hollows,  
Where the nested farms in the sunshine brood,  
And one day another tranquilly follows,  
    And life and the brook  
Flow on for ever the same ; and the glade  
That knew him no more took a pensive shade,  
And the wood pigeon sobbed of his loss in the wood.

## III.

And lo, he became, ah fell compulsion ! became  
The fair iridescent light without name,

That hovers and plays where the waters fall,  
Where the deathful waters beckon and call,  
The rainbow, the perilous splendour's breath,  
On the shivering foam of the falls of death.

## IV.

Ah, Love, and once thy young life was fair,  
Beneficent on the primal earth,  
That knew thee but as the morning's birth ;  
But now in beauty, in storm, and despair,  
A hovering splendour thou art from on high  
    Where the turbulent waters fall for ever  
        Of the dark ineffable river,  
And but to behold thee is still to die

## LOST IN LIFE.

My lost, my only Love, mine yet not mine,  
Whom dear religious death took not, but life,  
Hard life, not death who makes our loves divine,  
    Setting them high  
Like changeless stars above our changeful strife,  
    That do not die.

I cannot bury my beloved Dead  
Out of my sight ; I may not weep the while ;  
To look on that dead face I dare not dread ;  
    I meet thine eyes,  
Across my breaking heart I chat and smile,  
    My heart that dies.

My own dead kisses from those lips of thine  
Thrill me with hopeless longings till I ache,  
Lips where our spirits mingled, thine and mine,  
O loved too well !  
Lips that grown cold seek mine no more, yet spake  
No fond farewell.

Thy hands where once I laid my wet cheek down  
And found sweet ease of heart, now would not grasp  
Me if I slipped and fell unhelped, alone ;  
Hands folded now  
From mine, that cold shake off my clinging clasp,  
As boughs the snow.

I hear thy voice outside the closed door,  
Borne on my heart there comes a tender chime,  
So sweet, so sad, so lost for evermore,  
I bow my head,  
And make my moan for love's most pleasant time  
That now is dead.

And like some wretch, I listen to thy tones,  
Who wounded hears cold waters babbling by,  
Yet cannot crawl and drink, but parchèd moans ;

While, as he lies,  
That cool voice maddening mocks his agony,  
And fevered cries.

My thoughts that winged to thee their joyous way,  
Now like poor birds whose mossy home's delight  
All darkened strews the primrosed glades of May,

Forlorn, alone,  
Do beat the empty air in aimless flight,  
Their uses gone.

And that strong music, Love's own Orphic lute,  
That bound my days in rhythmic dance, and slow,  
Sweet, ordered motion, broken now and mute—

No sequence keep  
My unstrung days, my life confused falls low  
An aimless heap.

I sleep, and Sleep, Death's balmy brother—Sleep,  
That knows not life, restores thee tender, kind ;  
Thy lips meet mine, thine arms around me creep ;  
    The day appears,  
Those phantom kisses on my cheek I find  
    In cold, cold tears.

And yet, my only Love, I blame thee not,  
Since some impalpable influence alone  
Has sundered us, I know not whence, nor what,  
    Nor whither, yet ;  
I only know life through lost love has grown  
    One vast regret.

Like shipwrecked spars for self-same uses made,  
We met 'mid seas by self-same tempests tossed,  
Thy love a moment, by the same wave swayed,  
    For mine implores ;  
Then by some current swept apart and tossed  
    On separate shores.

And yet perchance, as Sleep gives thee again  
To this lost heart, so greater Death may move  
To richer ends, and rend the veil of pain,

The past fulfil ;

Till then, till then, my lost, my only Love,

I love thee still.



## THE WORLD-FORCES.

FORTH rush the invisible tides of light, the ineffable  
splendour,  
Giver and shaper of life, the shadow, of Love, the  
Almighty  
Energy primal, stupendous, which at the dawn of  
creation  
Shook asunder the nebulous heart of the All, that  
swung into rhythm  
Of worlds with their moons upon moons and belts of  
splendour concentric—  
Rush forth as the snow-water, leaps in spring from  
under the death-sheet,  
And bounds down the crags in a rapture of torrent  
and jubilant laughter,  
Bleaching the flat valley bottoms with boulders tossed  
down in its progress.

What world-crag shall bear the impact of light's irresistible forces,

The beat of her multitudinous pulses and surges of sun-fire ?

What mortal sense can abide the reflux wave of her glory,

Nor be caught in the swirl of its lightnings and dashed into uttermost darkness ?

But the strong tides broke on the heart of a new-blown flower whose secret

The night had kept from the world and hid in her odorous bosom,

And the reflux wave that ran back of the light's irresistible forces,

And broke and flooded my soul, was no terror of lightning,

But just a rose in her beauty, divine in her absolute weakness.

## CONSONANCES.

## I.

My heart, my heart was like to sing,  
So full it was of vague delight,  
    It could not speak,  
And all my happy thoughts on wing  
    Went flying, flying forth to seek  
Some sympathy of echoed light,  
Some ecstasy of answering glow ;  
    And nothing found,  
    Above, around,  
But three corn daisies in a row.

To my transfigured heart they shone  
Just like Orion's winter belt.  
    I sought in vain  
One warm June night, when one by one,  
    I counted o'er the starry train ;

And thought them gone, and wistful felt  
That they but frozen fields must beat  
    In other skies ;  
    When, sweet surprise !  
Behold, they blossomed at my feet.

And on their burning heads I spent  
That gladness of a passing hour,  
    Until it grew  
Half ecstasy, half daisy, blent  
    Inextricate in shape and hue,  
A joy embodied in a flower.  
All daisies now flash back afar  
    That passing joy  
    Nought can destroy,  
And walk in glory like a star.

## II.

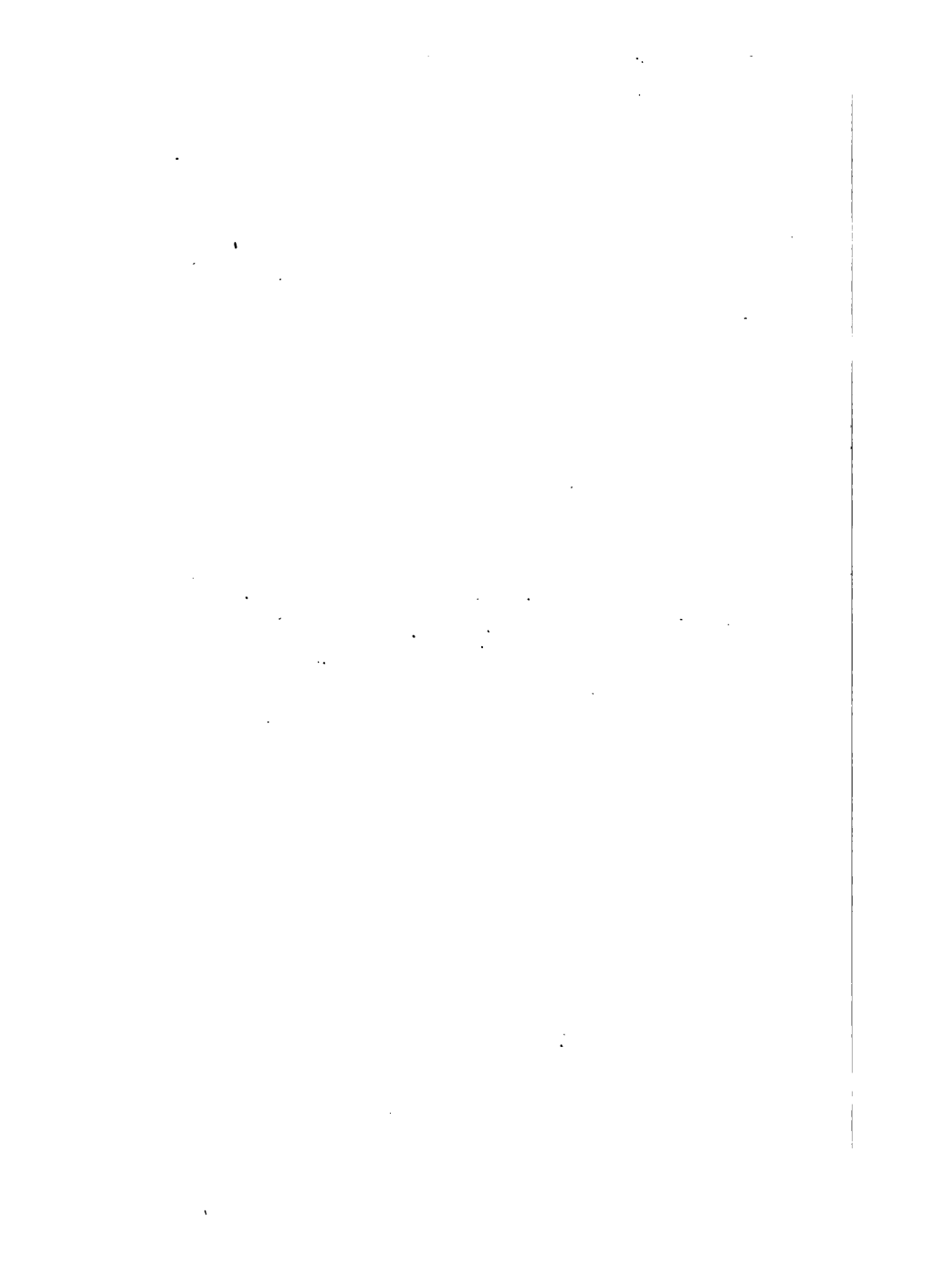
My heart, my heart was like to break,  
So full it was of anguish deep  
    It could not speak.

Only to ease the living ache  
    Something it sought, some image weak  
Of grief that may not wail or weep,  
To speak what else it could not bear ;  
    And nothing found,  
    Above, around,  
But one deep bed of bluebells there.

Down to the ground my face was bowed,  
And thought was not, but only woe,  
    As silently  
Through shining mists of tears they crowd,  
    Till all my vacant misery  
Ran blue with them, in springtime glow  
So fair, ah me ! so cruel fair,  
    Why was my heart  
    A bitter part  
Of all that happy beauty there ?

And now no bluebell bed in spring,  
But takes to me a touch forlorn,  
    In gladdest moods ;

Nor may I see them glimmering  
Like water through the light spring woods ;  
But lo, they seem one blue, blue morn,  
When once I thought that Love had crowned  
Me, even me—  
O misery !  
All dashed, and fallen to the ground.



## NOTES.

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### NOTE 1, PAGE 23.

The 'Linus Songs' were sung in the harvest-fields, or in the vineyards at vintage. They were of a tender and melancholy character, with a pathetic burthen, in which all joined, beating time with their feet; and seem to have been inspired by some sort of unconscious sense of sadness over the golden corn laid low and the purpling grapes gathered and crushed. They derive their name from Linus, a beautiful boy brought up among the sheep-folds, and torn to death by wild dogs.

### NOTE 2, PAGE 176.

The apparently fortuitous arrangement of leaves on the stem can in reality be expressed in fractions, of which the numerator indicates the number of turns of the spiral forming a cycle; while the denominator expresses the number of leaves on that cycle, the cycle being the series of leaves included by the spiral line in passing from the first leaf to that which stands directly above it. Thus  $\frac{1}{2}$  (grasses),  $\frac{1}{3}$  (tulip, alder, birch),  $\frac{2}{3}$  (leaves of apple, poplar, crab),  $\frac{2}{5}$  (leaves of holly, plantain),  $\frac{3}{5}$  (cones of *Pinus Strobilus*), etc. It will be observed that each fraction has its numerator composed of the sum of the numerators of the two preceding fractions, and its denominators of the sum of its two preceding denominators, and it is found that all higher complications in normal conditions of stems exhibit some fraction indicative of the same ratio.





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